THE MASTER OF THE HILL,

A Biography of JOHN MEIGS

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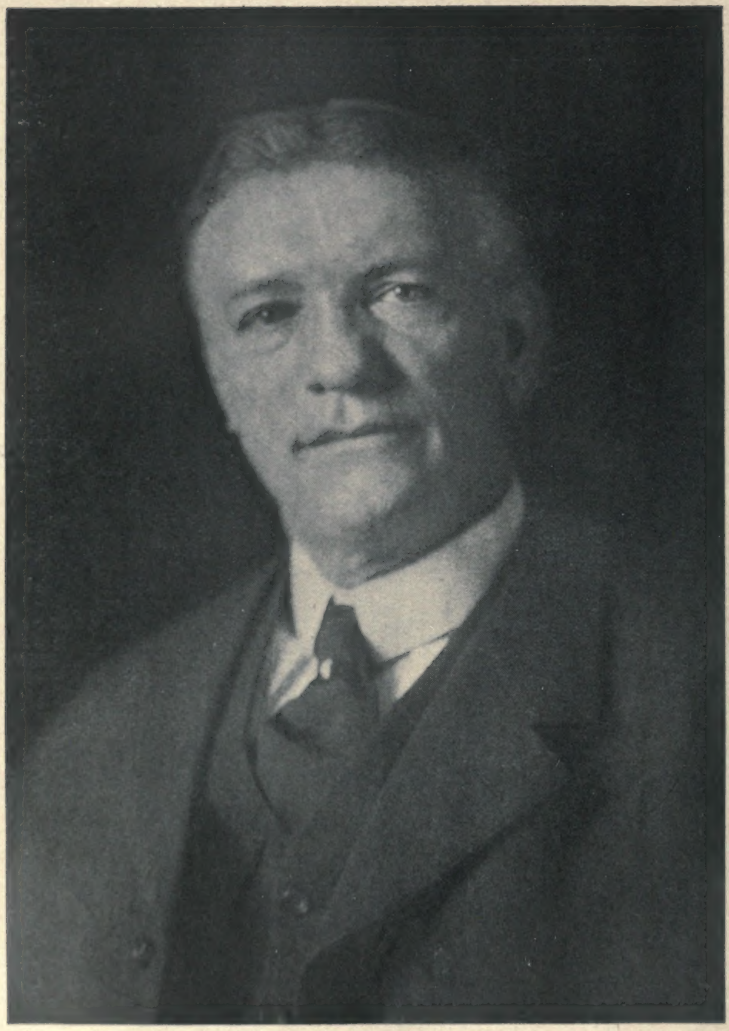
THE MASTER OF THE HILL



JOHN MEIGS

THE MASTER OF THE HILL

A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN MEIGS

BY

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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DEDICATION

"One Who Never Turned His Back but Marched Breast Forward,

Never Doubted Clouds Would Break,

Never Dreamed, Though Right Were Worsted, Wrong Would Triumph,

Held We Fall to Rise, Are Baffled to Fight Better,
Sleep to Wake."

PREFACE

AS that noble biography of Charles Kingsley was written by his wife, whose intimate understanding made her the one supremely able to reveal Charles Kingsley's spirit, so it would have been the ideal thing that this biography of John Meigs should have been written by her whose life was most closely linked to his. For a time, indeed, Mrs. Meigs did intend to write this book, but various difficulties compelled her to postpone the undertaking. Then, through her gracious willingness, the responsibility came to me; and as a work of love and noble privilege I received it. As a boy, first, in the school, I knew the Master of the Hill, and afterwards as a teacher I worked under him for a little while. To this attempt to record his life I bring, therefore, some knowledge and much love.

The material which the following pages embody has come from many sources. Through the efforts of Mrs. Meigs herself was most of it gathered. Three years ago she sent letters to a great number of the graduates of The Hill School, and to other

friends of John Meigs, asking that they should allow her to copy any letters from him which they might have received and preserved, and also that they should write down their recollections of any special incidents which they remembered as characteristic of him. The responses which came to this request have been in my hands. Also Mrs. Meigs read through her own letters from her husband, and copied a number of paragraphs which she was willing should be used at my discretion. From her, too, has come information concerning facts in John Meigs' life which otherwise could not have been known. But when this is said, there should be linked with it another statement. Upon the present writer, directly and particularly, rests the responsibility for the inclusion in this book of certain references to Mrs. Meigs herself, which she for her own part would have avoided. It is only because I have persuaded her to recognize that they are linked inextricably with the attempt to make complete the picture of John Meigs' life and work that she has suffered to be printed here those even now too brief suggestions of her influence at The Hill.

Most of the facts concerning John Meigs' earlier ancestors are drawn from "The Meigs Family in America," by Henry B. Meigs, of

Baltimore, published in 1902. From two dear friends, Mrs. Rossiter W. Raymond and Mrs. Thomas M. Drown; from Mr. William S. Wells and Mr. Louis Richards, students at The Hill under Dr. Matthew Meigs; and through Professor W. T. Owen, of Lafayette, has come the larger part of such recollections of John Meigs' own younger days as are preserved. Mr. George Q. Sheppard, Mr. Alfred G. Rolfe, Mr. Arthur Judson and Mr. Frank W. Pine, from among the masters of The Hill, have contributed reminiscences of exceptional importance. Out of the many responses which came to Mrs. Meigs' request to the "old boys" and other friends that they write what they remembered best about him, much that is illuminating has been gathered. As a rule, it has not seemed fitting to give the names of those from whom these personal recollections came; but to them all, both those who will recognize in the pages that follow quotations from letters they have written, and to those also whose words, though not printed, have none the less helped to shape the present author's conclusions, this tribute of indebtedness is here set down.

Pre-eminently also is gratitude due to Dr. Robert E. Speer for inestimable counsel and help in the publication of this book.

Certain letters of Dr. Meigs to his sister,

Miss Elizabeth W. Meigs, and to his daughters, have been available, as well as carbon copies of a part of his correspondence to persons in general concerning the affairs of the school. Two addresses made by Dr. Meigs, in which he set forth his conception of what a school should be, have been of immense value as giving the key to his plans and ideals. In these, under the form of a general discussion, he has often revealed his own soul. But, with the exception of these, and some memoranda of talks to the boys, there is a scarcity of the kind of material which one craves most in the assembling of a book like this. John Meigs kept no diary. The deep and intense emotion, and the powerful thought which made him great, expressed themselves more characteristically in action than in any deliberate summing up in written word. He was conspicuously free from the kind of self-regard which would have made him think that what he was dreaming and desiring would some day be of interest to people at large—save as embodied silently in the work which he did from day to day; and so he seldom spread out for inspection his thoughts and feelings concerning the duties and hopes which pertained individually to himself. It was not that he was reserved, for, on the contrary, he was impetuous and

lavish to his friends of the best he felt he had. Rather, the explanation lies in his singular humility—that humility which can belong sometimes to those who are confident and masterful when they lay their hands to a work so great as to clothe their spirit with the authority of a high commission, but who, in their estimate of the interest which they themselves may have for others, are incredulous with almost a child's simplicity of heart.

So the fact stands that he who could best have given the materials for this book has given them, so far as written words are concerned, only in fragments here and there. Happily in his letters to those whom he loved best, where these may be quoted, he has given us flashing insights into his deepest self; but chiefly he expressed himself in the school which he builded and in the lives which he molded. From what he did, therefore, and from what others have found him to be, rather than from what he himself has said, must a large part of this book be made.

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THE MASTER OF THE HILL

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CHAPTER I

SCHOOLMASTER AND MAN

The Two Aspects of John Meigs to Be Considered; His Constructive Achievement and His Personal Character—The Function of the Great Schools in the Life of the Nation—Shaping Ideals for Others—The Arena of the Man's Own Heart.

THIS is the story of one who lived nobly and wrought well. It is written not alone, nor even chiefly, in order that the boys who knew John Meigs at The Hill School, and others who were his friends, may have this enlargement of their own memories, but rather because his life was such that the story of it ought to go out with its kindling message to all those everywhere who rejoice in idealism and gallantry and strength.

Two separable threads of interest are interwoven in this record of John Meigs' life. The first and more obvious interest has to do with the visible work he accomplished. "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice," one might say of John Meigs, as one stands in the quad-

rangles of The Hill School, as truly as men say it of Sir Christopher Wren, when they stand under the dome of St. Paul's. He took a small and ill-equipped institution, the mere framework of a school, with two teachers and twenty boys. He built upon that foundation a great plant, unsurpassed in America for completeness and efficiency. At his death there were forty masters and three hundred and seventy-five boys, working under an organization so clear and firm that, even when the school was left without a leader, its work moved on with no break and no uncertainty. From an obscure venture he lifted The Hill School in his lifetime into the rank of the great preparatory schools of America.

What this means will grow more impressively evident as time goes on. We are only beginning to understand the power which the influential schools of the United States will exercise upon the coming thought and will of the nation—only beginning to invest the schools here with that dignity of association which belongs to the schools of an older world. To many persons in America the names of the schools in England are doubtless more familiar than the names of those in our own land. Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby, Uppingham—thousands know these who have never seen their towers.

They have entered into the stories, the history—one might almost say the legends—of the English race, on whichsoever side of the Atlantic it may be. The glamour and romance of many generations clothes them with an imperishable garment, the mellowing touch of the vanished centuries is upon their walls, and the aroma of old hopes and dreams and desirings is sweet within their gardens and their cloistered walks. The great personalities who have inspired their life have sent the echo of their message far and wide. Countless boys have read "Tom Brown at Rugby," and felt the power of the soul of Thomas Arnold. Many, too, have read of Thring of Uppingham. Under men like these, the schools of England have trained the leaders of the nation. They have taught boys from whose ranks should come those who were to do the great work of their generations, honor and manliness and truth. They have cultivated in their class-rooms—not always without severity and rigor—the power of sound scholarship; and on their athletic grounds they have wrought the stamina of those who, not in the day's encounter alone, but in the larger tests of later life, have learned how to "play the game." The saying attributed to the Duke of Wellington is famous that—"the battle of Waterloo was

won on the playing fields of Eton." Whether that be so or not, it is true that in the great schools of England men have been bred who have fought well in those many battles of the common day, which if less dramatic are not less real.

Obviously, the schools in America cannot possess as yet that quality of romance and that long richness of human traditions which invest the schools of England. Yet the real achievements of the more anciently famous schools they can repeat—nay, more than that. They can do in this larger country a work which while partaking of all that is sound and honorable in the earlier traditions, can add to these the fresh enthusiasm, the unhampered and creative imagination, of the free and virile democracy in the midst of which they stand. To this ideal the greater schools are already attaining. They are perpetuating high traditions of scholarship. They are training boys, too, not only in mind, but also in heart and will. They are developing individuals with that broad open-mindedness to the individual's possibilities, which is characteristic of America, and yet at the same time they are teaching that which is selfish in the boy's individualism to subordinate itself in a nobler *esprit de corps* to the purposes and aims of the school. And, best of

all, they are helping boys to understand that the snobbishness which boasts of inherited wealth and privilege, and makes this an excuse for selfish laziness, is a contemptible thing, and that the only manly and honorable life is one that is trying truly to fit itself to be of use.

To have as one's accomplishment the creation of a school like this means not only to have affected for good the immediate group which the school has trained, but through that to have set in motion impulses in education and life the bounds of which cannot be marked. Such a work John Meigs achieved, and because of that the story of what he wrought is significant to all those who regard the potencies of American life with seeing eyes.

But, as we said at the beginning, in thinking of him, there are not one, but two threads of interest to be followed. The first, of which we have spoken, deals with that which is the more obvious—since it has to do in part with visible things. Yet it is the second which reaches down to a deeper and more instinctive chord of human response. Comparatively few persons are immediately concerned with the details of the building or the government of schools. We do not expect ourselves to be confronted with these particular tasks and

problems; and howsoever much we may admire what another has achieved in this direction, we should not be helped in our particular responsibilities by the technical facts of what a schoolmaster had managed to do. We might be interested, but not moved. But if through "The Master of The Hill" we can see and understand the man—see the human soul in all the poignant reality of its kinship to our own—aspiring, struggling, conscious of faults, battling for self-mastery, mindful of its limitations, yet reaching after God—then we begin to know that we are not reading a story impersonal to ourselves. Rather, we shall be reading one more expression of that infinite drama of human life, which is not without us only, but within us too—the reflection in another's experience, made perhaps the more clear thus for us to consider and understand, of realities which, intuitively at least, we dimly know. When in this sense we read the record of another man's life and working, it does not matter what that man professionally was, or what we are. Butcher, baker, candle-stick-maker, man of business, lawyer, doctor, woman in her home—whatever we may be, we recognize in a man who has genuinely lived, no matter in what sphere he moved, an experience and an inspiration which may become the heritage of us all.

In this vital and human sense, therefore, we shall think of John Meigs. There was nothing remote about him. No one who knew him would try to ascribe to him that passionless perfection with which sometimes an amiable but anæmic art paints its haloed saints—the saints who in reality were men fashioned into refinement through much sore discipline and courageous pain. There was a great deal in him which was fine and lovely from the first; but there were elements also against which he had to fight with grievous effort. In his relationship with those he loved best, and in his relationship with all persons in those many times when his easily roused sympathy overflowed, he was full of a lovely tenderness. He kept even through weary years a boy's capacity for fun and enthusiastic playfulness. But he had a will which when it was set upon some goal drove forward with a kind of awe-inspiring inflexibility; and they who blocked it, did so at their peril. When his plans were interfered with, or more especially when he confronted stupid inefficiency and wilful wrong, he could launch against the offender a blast of scorn and anger which withered like a flame; but when he himself had been unjust, none could be more swift and humbly eager to make amends. There were moments in his work at the school when it seemed as though

his nature were being hammered out by the mighty strokes of conflicting influences, and fashioned into the larger likeness still to be revealed.

While he was still living, there was on exhibition once in New York a piece of sculpture which, to some who looked at it, seemed strangely symbolic of these spiritual facts which were true of him. It was a great head of Abraham Lincoln, colossal in size, deliberately half-hewn, unfinished. The face was beautiful with haunting power, full of all the mystery and the majesty of the brooding human soul—and back of it only the unhewn marble. The Master of The Hill, whom many feared and many loved, had a soul whose creation seemed like that. Always those who looked upon him saw that he was fashioned out of a larger mould than common men. In every sense there was a bigness about him. The soul of the man looked out of him, great and strong and yearning. Yet one could feel back of it something of the elemental ruggedness—almost the harshness—of the human material which the divine spark was slowly transfusing and transfiguring. Sometimes there came a kind of awesome sense of the contrary possibilities of his nature. The powerful will, the impetuous and sometimes passionate emotion, the volcanic energy, might

have been as terrible had they been turned toward any evil as they were glorious turned toward good. He, himself, must have been aware of the peril, as well as the possibilities, of those elements within him. He had that highest wisdom of humility which made him know that he, himself, was not sufficient to rule his spirit well. He reached up after God with a genuineness such as only a man in deepest earnest concerning the great business of his living can possess. He grew and changed under the touch of that higher spirit which he sought. From the beginning strong, impetuous, generous, true, he became, as the years went on, more patient, self-controlled, forbearing. He won through many a battle, and not without pain and wounds, the finished manhood of his final and noblest years.

CHAPTER II

JOHN MEIGS' ANCESTRY, AND HIS ANTECEDENTS AT THE HILL

Pioneers of the Meigs Name in the Life of New England—The First John Meigs and His Adventures—Figures of Mark in the Generations Following—The Father and Mother of John Meigs, of The Hill—The Beginning of the School in 1851.

THOUGH John Meigs, himself, was born in Pennsylvania, went to school and college and spent all the years of his working life there, and died within the walls of the house in which he was born, his earlier ancestry belonged to another part of the country. The first of the family line in America who bore his name was John Meigs, of Hammonassett, near Guilford, Connecticut, who, with his father, Vincent Meigs, came to New England in the very early days of the Plymouth colony and was in Weymouth by 1639. It was in 1654 that Vincent Meigs and his sons came to Hammonassett. There they lived till the father died in 1658, and John Meigs remained there until—shortly before his death, which befell in 1672—he removed to Killingworth.

Concerning this John Meigs, the following quaint record is embodied in the official pro-

ceedings of the Court of Guilford for December 4th, 1657.

"John Meigs being called for on complaint that he came with his cart from Hamonaſſet late in the night on the Lord's Day, making a noiſe as he came, to the offenſe of many who heard it.

"Then appeared and answered that he was miſtaken in the time of day, Thinking that he had time enough for the journey. But being somewhat more ladened than he apprehended, the cattle came more slowly than uſual, and so caſt him behind, it proving to be more late of the day than he had thought. But he profeſsed to be sorry for his miſtake, and the offenſe juſtly given thereby, promiſing to be more careful for the time to come.

"The Court conſidered the promiſees did see cauſe (seeing that the matter seemed to be done through a surpriſsel and not willingly) to paſs it over with a reproof for this firſt time, on his giving a public acknowledgement of his evil in so neglecting to remember the Sabbath, on the next lecture or firſt day, with all the aggravating circumſtances in it."

The wearied legs of John Meigs' cattle thus brought him on this occasion unwillingly into court, and he might have counted himself fortunate to have escaped as well as he did from "his evil in so neglecting to remember the Sabbath"; but there appear to have been other times when he had come into court upon

his own motion, and had had more reason to be sorry that he did. Earlier in the same year of 1657, he appears on the court docket as plaintiff in a suit against two citizens of the nearby town of Saybrook, as defendants. In those early days of New England, the sparse crops grown out of the soil wrung with sore difficulty from the wilderness were too precious to be tamely allowed to be invaded, and so John Meigs launched against his neighbors, Chapman and Parker, an action for trespass to stimulate them to a more particular guardianship of their piratical "hoggs." He alleged that after he had "fenced his land at Athamonfsook, with such an orderly fence as was sufficient to keep out great cattell; yet the Defendants' hoggs came into his field and destroyed his corne."

One of the witnesses testified that he had driven fifteen of Parker's hogs out of John Meigs' cornfield, and that furthermore he had seen, at "Sundry other times the Defendants' hoggs in Corne doing Spoile."

The defendants replied, for their part, that instead of John Meigs' fence being the proud creation "sufficient to keep out great cattell" which he declared it was, as a matter of fact it was no sufficient fence to discourage even hogs. The Court thereupon appointed reviewers to examine the fence and pass an

opinion upon it. Their judgment was disastrous to John Meigs' contention, and the Court returned a verdict in favor of Chapman and Parker, with the expression, however, of a hope that the defendants would "conſider the great loſse the plaintiff sustained by their hoggs, and that, therefore, in a neighborly way they should conſider to afford some supply, as themselves would deſire in a like caſe. That amity and good agreement might be the better maintained betwixt the perſons and towns of Seabrooke and Guilford as formerly."

Besides growing his crops, John Meigs—like the rest of his neighbors in that hardy and self-sustaining life of the early colony—was a tanner and currier as well. In 1647, he brought against one Gregory a suit for damages because the latter had spoiled material which he, the plaintiff, had furnished, by making it up into several dozen pairs of bad shoes. The Court seems to have been more impressed by the disagreement than by the right of either party to claim much justification, and fined Gregory five pounds and John Meigs ten!

But if not very successful at the bar of the Courts, John Meigs was eminently successful in more important matters. He was a man of mark in many aspects of the life of

that colony in Connecticut where he dwelt. The most dramatic single event in his career had to do with the aftermath of the Cromwellian period in England and the attempts of Charles II, when he was restored to the throne, to punish on both sides of the Atlantic certain of the men who had brought about his father's execution. The judges who had passed the sentence of death upon Charles I were excluded from the general amnesty proclaimed to most of the party of the Commonwealth; and three of these, Edward Whalley, William Goffe and John Dixwell, had come to Connecticut and sought refuge near New Haven. Governor Endicott, in Boston, sent two commissioners to apprehend these regicides, and they set out in 1661 to discharge that commission. But when they got to Guilford where the fugitives were supposed to be concealed, they found that the quarry had fled; and in the report which they submitted to Governor Endicott they declared:

"To our certain knowledge, one John Meigs was sent a horseback before us, and by his speedy going so early before day, he gave them information so that they escaped us."

The John Meigs, therefore, who was not averse to fighting his own battles at law was

not afraid either to espouse unselfishly the perilous cause of others; and he had the daring, the hardihood and the skill to carry it off gallantly to success.

When this first John Meigs died in 1672, he bequeathed his farm to his son of the same name, and a pleasant commentary upon his conception of the kind of things that were of value is in the item of his will which specifies as part of his son's inheritance, "all my wrightings, Books and manucripts, alſo my book of Marters, Rolls, Hiſtory of ye World, Bacons, Thomas Bacons, alſo Simpſon's English Greek Lexicon, and Thams Dixonarye."

This John Meigs' wife was Thomasine Fry, of Weymouth, England, whom he had married before coming to America with his father, Vincent. Two of his daughters bear witness to the Puritan atmosphere which the thoughts of men and women at that time breathed, for their names were "Concurrence" and "Tryal." Two other daughters also he had, and the one son, whom we have already mentioned, named after himself.

This second John Meigs, like his father, was also a leading personage in his community. He had been born at Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1641, but was taken with his parents when they moved to Connecticut, and there he remained for the rest of his long life.

He was one of the twelve patentees named in the charter of Guilford in 1685, and in 1692 he was made deacon of the First Church of Guilford, an office which meant no little dignity and authority in the theocratic New England of that day.

Deacon John Meigs and his wife, Sarah Wilcox, had eight children, the third of whom, and the second son, Janna, succeeded his father as deacon in the Guilford church. He was a representative also in the Connecticut Legislature and a captain in the train-band of Guilford during restless years of Indian warfare. When Janna Meigs died in 1739, the Reverend Jonathan Todd, pastor of the church in East Guilford, preached a eulogy over him in which he must have found a wondrous amount to say—seeing that the printing of it in a subsequent pamphlet covered forty-four pages. In the course of it he said:

"And here, I think, I may in particular recommend unto us for our Imitation, the Example, that hath been set for us, by the worshipful and much reſpected Perſon, whom God hath the Week paſt, diſmiſsed from a State of Trial, amongſt us, and admitted, as we doubt not, to inherit the Promiſes. . . .

"He was endued with that natural Capacity neceſsary to make a great and uſeful Man;

which was improved by a pious Education under the Care of his Parents, and recommended by many agreeable Qualifications.

"He was, therefore, taken Notice of, as one capable of publick Service and Betruſtments amongſt us: And was therefore promoted to Civil and Military Honours and Offices amongſt us. He hath been a Father unto us, the Leader of our Publick Affairs; and rendered Himſelf very uſeful unto us. The Gentleman hath been conſpicuous in him— His Converſation was pleaſant and improving. And his natural Temper helped to recommend him to the love and affections of his acquaintances, which was the Serious and the Grave temper'd with the Cheerful. He was a pleaſant Companion to the Wife, and a generous Friend. . . .

"But that, which I eſpecially propoſe to remark, is, his Piety and exemplary Vertues. Religion was what seem'd to be moſt upon his Heart; to approve himself faithful unto God, in the Places and Relations in which Divine Providence had set him, seem'd to be his greateſt Concern."

Janna Meigs and Hannah Willard, his wife, had nine children, two of whom were twins, and the arrival of whom seems to have been received with a mingling of consternation and the meekness of recollected piety. The tradition runs that "on the announcement of the arrival of the first, to check the rejoicing of the family, Janna Meigs said, 'Silence,' and

on that of the second, moved by his patient spirit, he said, 'Submit.' The twins were afterwards given these names."

The eldest son of Janna Meigs, born in 1699, was named after his father; and the youngest son of this second Janna, Seth Meigs, was the first of the family line to leave New England. He settled in Albany, where he married, and whence he went out to serve in the Continental Army during the Revolution. He married Jemina Van Boskerk, the widow of William Van Loan—and had one son. To this son, John, who married Hannah Kughler, was born—among eleven children—a son who was named Matthew Kughler, and this Matthew K. Meigs was the father of the John Meigs with whom this book has to do.

This lengthy tracing of ancestry is of worth because it helps us with more appreciative eyes to interpret the character of the man whose lineage it forms. It is not from father and mother alone that the deepest elements in inherited disposition may come. Dim impulses which stir in the blood, and half-hidden inclinations which work in the subconscious mind, may owe their origin to the far-off generations, just as the direction of the river is shaped not so much by the immediate channel as by the set of the streams that rise in the

unseen distant hills. Something of that first John Meigs, who in the seventeenth century saved the regicides by his "speedy and unexpected going so early before day," may have lived again in the strong son of the ninth generation, who in his different world could show a vigor and an impetuous energy like his ancestor of the older day. The spirit of that second John Meigs, too, the sturdy brother of Concurrence and Tryal, and deacon of the church in Guilford, may have helped to fashion that inmost fibre of loyalty to religious things which the last John Meigs, like the earlier one, possessed. To men like these, and to women who were the wives and mothers, on both sides of his house, if less traceably yet not less really than to his father and mother, he owed the qualities that came to him at his birth.

On his mother's side also, John Meigs' ancestry linked him with New England. His mother's name was Mary Moulton Gould. Her father, William Ripley Gould, who could trace his descent back to the Bradfords and Brewsters of the first Plymouth Colony, was born and brought up in Sharon, Connecticut, and before he was ready to enter college he became engaged to Eunice York, of Torrington. She would not marry him, though, until he had finished his education, and so the

seven-year engagement continued until he had graduated from Yale College, in 1812, and then—for he had determined to become a minister—had gone his way through the Divinity School. Claiming his bride at last, he took her to his first parish, in Gallipolis, Ohio, and there in the Manse Mary Gould was born. Later, when she and the other children began to be ready for school, her father moved to his wife's old home, Torrington. All the rest of her girlhood was spent in New England, and there she went to Mt. Holyoke Seminary in the early days of Mary Lyon. In 1836, she met Matthew Meigs and they were married in 1842. Of loving and gentle spirit, and marked—as we shall see anon—by an unselfish consecration which grew out of religious loyalties that were as winsome as they were deep, she was to give to her son those profounder emotional qualities which increasingly should dominate his nature.

Matthew K. Meigs, John Meigs' father, went from his father's home, in Albany, to Union College, from which he graduated in 1836, and then entered Union Theological Seminary, whence he went out as a Presbyterian minister, in 1839. For a very short while he was pastor of a church in Pontiac, Michigan, but his temperament was not such as to make the pastoral work permanently

congenial. The intellectual side of him predominated, and he shortly left the regular activities of a parish minister for educational work. For four years he was a professor in the University of Michigan, in 1844 became assistant to Dr. Boyd, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Winchester, Virginia, and later removed to Newark, Delaware, to become president, until 1851, of Delaware College.

In that year, he concluded that his health was not strong enough for him to continue in his college presidency, and he determined that he would go somewhere and establish a small day school, in which also he would train his own boys. Mrs. Meigs' younger sister, Rebecca, had married Reverend W. R. Work, and these two were conducting at that time a school for girls, called the "Cottage Seminary," in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. On the crest of a low but abrupt hill, which rose just in front of the Seminary, was an old stone mansion, set among trees, and this Dr. Meigs bought, and thither he removed with his family in 1851. Some of the lads at Delaware College—which was itself then hardly more than a school—wanted to come with him, and for these he added a wing to the original school building; and thus the boarding-school on The Hill began.

Pottstown, on the outskirts of which the school was established, lies on the northeast bank of the Schuylkill River, some forty miles above Philadelphia. By the early part of the eighteenth century it had been discovered that there was iron in the region, and in 1716 Thomas Rutter, of Germantown, came and built some two miles above the present town what is said to have been the first forge in America. Tribes of Delaware Indians roamed over the country, but the sturdy Rutter established himself in safety; and in 1720 his friend, Thomas Potts, Jr., came also from Germantown to join him in the manufacture of iron. This Thomas Potts, who at Rutter's death succeeded him in the control of the business, was the founder of the family from whom the settlement that grew up around the iron forges took its name—the name first of Pottsgrove, changed in 1829 to Pottstown. John Potts, the son of Thomas, laid out the streets of the town and divided it into lots; and it was a grandson of John Potts who about 1795 built the stone house on The Hill which Matthew Meigs was afterwards to buy.

The valley of the Schuylkill is naturally a pleasant country, of gentle undulations and not infertile lands, green and fair to look upon; but its great iron deposits have called

into being along the banks of the river the huge iron foundries that have given their character to the towns. They are industrial communities, with an industrial population, and an industrial aspect. One would never now deliberately pick out Pottstown as the natural site for a great school, for there is little in the town itself which suggests scholastic quiet and the mellow atmosphere of meditation. Yet upon the borders of the town, by the adventure of Matthew Meigs' purchase, the school which was to grow to large importance established itself amid its trees upon its hill.

In these first days, the school blended quaintly an exceeding simplicity of physical equipment and an elaborate old-fashioned suggestion of the culture which its founder wished it to inspire. The only building for the work of the school at first was the square, big-roomed residence itself, to which presently was added the brick addition to the east. Back of the school was a large barn, with the barnyard, the horses and cattle and farming implements such as belonged to any other country house; for the school at that time lay beyond the limits of the town, and the open country stretched pleasantly on every side but one. A crude gymnasium, made out of part of a stable, and containing nothing within its

walls except a trapeze and parallel bars, served the boys as part of their play space, and in fine weather they played about the slopes of the hills and fields, to the northeastward, or went swimming in the Schuylkill River.

Inside the house, however, from the simplicity of field and farmyard, the boys entered into another, and to their young minds an imposing, atmosphere. Fortunately, there is still a living witness to these first days of the school. Mr. William S. Wells, of New Haven, was a boy in Pottstown when Dr. Matthew K. Meigs first bought from Nathaniel P. Hobart the house on The Hill and moved into it to begin his school. "I can recall the day," says Mr. Wells, "when the school was opened in 1851, and the entrance to the grounds through a large gate, quite near what was called 'Hobart's Run.' I was ten years of age at that time, and well remember the morning when, with a few other boys, I went up The Hill on the long curved road to the house. We assembled in a room in the southwest corner of the house—now the parlor—which was surrounded on three sides by a broad piazza. I have a very distinct remembrance of the conspicuous paper on the walls of this room, I think of Greek or Roman personages, prominent in classical his-

tory, or mythological conceptions of those days."

By other boys also this amazing paper was regarded with awe-struck eyes, and was long afterwards remembered. Mr. Louis Richards, who entered the school in 1855, and many years afterwards made an address concerning those first days, said: "The walls of its spacious hallway were decorated with scenes from Scott's 'Lady of the Lake,' and those of its western parlor with sketches illustrating the 'Quest of Telemachus.' Hung upon the walls of the library and reception room were many beautiful engravings, while busts of Socrates, Demosthenes, Cicero, Seneca and Homer looked down from their niches upon the students of classic lore."

Mr. Wells continues:

"Before the session opened in the school room, we had to take off our shoes in the anteroom, put on slippers and wear what was called a wrapper, generally made from gaudy-colored cotton cloth. And we marched into the school room in military order—standing at desk, being seated, opening the desk and taking out the books by the tap of a bell.

"After the grounds were graded, statues of classical personages were placed at various locations in the grounds near the house, which was an innovation in decoration for this neighborhood. An inquiry one day, to Dr.

Meigs' disgust, was to know 'Who those generals were?'"

Mr. Wells' description of Dr. Matthew Meigs himself is vivid:

"The personal appearance of Dr. Meigs, who was a finely developed man, in his long, gaudy wrapper, and his austere face, is fixed indelibly in my memory. He was a man of quick movements, but a splendid disciplinarian, and governed the boys by advice and admonition, not unmixed with fear. To be sent to him, or sent for by him, for an infraction of the rules or a misdemeanor, was dreaded worse than if corporal punishment had been expected. Much that Dr. Meigs said was burned into my memory and has served me well through life. He was very severe on the indolent or careless or obstinate, and especially those scholars who were indifferent or lazy and did not make preparation for recitations. He was a most effective teacher. I can recall later in the school when I was studying Geometry that he unexpectedly appeared one day to hear the recitation. I, like some other boys, had a fairly good faculty to memorize, and just before the recitation I memorized the propositions and could repeat them parrot-style without comprehending the subject. This day, when Dr. Meigs unexpectedly appeared, he sent me to the blackboard first. I drew the figure, put the letters on the angles as in the book; repeated the caption, and was about to commence when he

ordered me to erase all the letters and substitute figures on the angles. I could not then even make a beginning to elucidate the proposition. He found other pupils were as ignorant of the principles of the subject as I was. The teacher who had this class did not receive any compliment for his efficiency, and we were turned back to the beginning of the book, and then, advancing slowly, more fully comprehended the subject we were studying."

As these recollections of the man whom long ago as a lad he taught may suggest, Dr. Matthew Meigs was a man of great scholarly attainment. He knew not only his Greek and Latin and modern languages thoroughly, but was familiar with Hebrew and Sanskrit also. His reading was rapid and of an exceeding range. He was a stern and often impatient teacher, but he kindled in the boys an intense admiration for his own attainments, and a sense of the dignity of learning which they saw exemplified in him. Without doubt, however, there were times when the boys' sense of the sternness of his methods outweighed every other impression which they got from him. Here is a letter which one little lad wrote home on January 2d, 1863:

" Dear Father:

" write to Mr. meigs and tell him not to wip me any more for nothing I have hade to much

of his wiping and I am not agoing to take any more I write his name with A small m to discrace it now remember write soon.

" yours effectionetely,

" G. G. Browning."

If Dr. Meigs' punishment was visited on the boy on account of his dereliction in spelling, it must be admitted that the master had some excuse for his violent procedure.

His temperament was not such as to make the work of the school long tolerable to him. He was sensitive and nervous, and his habit of intense study, and the late hours to which he read at night, contributed to make him irritable and restless under the burden of the school routine. He built for himself, therefore, a house some hundred yards away from the original school building, on the school grounds, and moved into it with his family. But his wife, who loved the boys and the life with them, and in her sweet mothering was an abiding influence upon them all, was unhappy in the separation from the immediate activities of the school, and after a time the family moved back again into the original residence.

Settled there again, Dr. Meigs fitted up for himself a study in the corner of the house that commanded a wide outlook over the tree-tops, and withdrew himself more and more

into a solitary existence. He entrenched himself contentedly among his books and put the school into the hands of vice-principals, who conducted it for him. The result was that the school began to decline in efficiency and in numbers. There was needed some new leader to come and take it if it was ever to advance to real importance and commanding rank.

CHAPTER III

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

John Meigs; His Birth in 1852, and Boyhood—Lafayette College in the Mid-Nineteenth Century—John Meigs' Entrance as a Student—College Life, and Friendships—Reminiscences—His Summons to the Work of the School.

ON August 31st, 1852, in the corner room of the old stone mansion on The Hill that looks out over the sloping lawn and over the town towards the river, and the walls of which were to include afterwards a part of his own study, John Meigs was born. It was only one year before that the school had been established, and so in the surroundings of the new institution, and as a boy within the ranks of the other boys, he was to grow up. He was the fifth child and the fourth son among eleven brothers and sisters.

His grandfather and grandmother on his mother's side, the Reverend William Ripley Gould and Mrs. Gould, were living at The Hill. Father Gould, as the boys affectionately called him, was superintendent of the farm and grounds, and sometimes used to preach also in the Presbyterian Church of the town.

The little boy, John, was the special favorite of his grandparents. Every morning he used to gather up his clothes in a bundle in his arms, and go from his mother's room, where he slept, into his grandparents' room next door to dress. He was an alert and inquiring child, and one of the recollections which have come down from those earlier years is that when he would go into his grandparents' room he used to begin to spell the names of the different articles of furniture and other things in the room. "Bureau" baffled him for a long time, but finally he got that too. He remembered very vividly in after years the only time his grandfather punished him. He had called the colored cook's little boy a "nigger," which so outraged Grandfather Gould's ideas of kindliness that he spanked him first and then prayed with him. His mother used to spank him at other times also, and his grandfather would have occasion to pray with him too. When he was head of the school, his study included the space that used to be his mother's room and his grandparents' room also, and he liked to tell that it was reminiscent to him of both sorts of chastening experience.

In the school he came under his father's discipline, and Dr. Matthew Meigs' rigorous

ideas of scholarship were not at all abated, but rather made more urgent, in their application to his own son. By the time he was six, he was in the Latin class. By the time he was eight, he was being taught Greek with his older brothers. Mr. Wells remembers that the Meigs boys, if they did not know their lessons, would usually be more severely dealt with than the others in their class, though the boys in general recognized that the upbraiding was meant for their benefit and warning also.

Among his companions John Meigs was a vigorous, upstanding lad, liked and respected and looked up to on the playground, and in other places where the boys would meet together. They had a habit of referring disputes to him, for already a certain authoritative justice in the boy's character had begun to impress his companions.

His entrance into college came in singular fashion. Lafayette College, founded at Easton, Pennsylvania, in 1832, under Presbyterian control, had been appealing to all Presbyterian ministers to send their sons there. Dr. Matthew Meigs accordingly sent his two eldest boys, and in the fall of 1866 he took the third, Edward Kirk, to Easton to enter him. On the trip he carried John along; and, with his austere ideas of scholarship, he

was very much disgusted by the examinations, which were all oral, and to his thought absurdly easy. "Why, this boy here could pass them!" he said, and forthwith he had the boy try. John did pass; and his father promptly entered him in the college, and departed for home.

The elder brother died in December, and the lad of fourteen, left alone in the college to which he had been introduced in such summary fashion, was naturally unhappy. So his father took him away after Christmas, and carried him with him to Europe for a trip which lasted until the autumn.

One boyish letter, written to his mother, telling her of the things he had seen in Rome, remains as the only immediate record of the lad's experiences. There is nothing in the letter which is extraordinary, nor indicative as yet of anything except the natural interest of the boy in new experiences and strange associations.

Two echoes of this early journey appear in letters written many years afterwards:

"I visited this place [Perugia] when I was in Italy as a boy, and remember particularly the promenade on the city walls in the evening when everybody and a few more seemed to be in evidence, and the view from the aforesaid walls.

In the fall of 1867 he re-entered Lafayette College, and began that part of his college course which was to be continued now until his graduation in 1871. The college, then thirty-five years old, was still simple and almost primitive in its equipment, and sparsely endowed. It was situated beautifully on a bluff above old Easton and the Delaware River, in the midst of what had been a farm and orchard; apple trees still grew upon the college campus, and the fences of the farm divisions ran here and there. There were fifty-eight men in John Meigs' class, which was nearly half of the total number—one hundred and twenty-eight—in the whole college. There were fourteen professors and four assistants in the faculty.

Founded as a Presbyterian college, and under the direct control of the Philadelphia Synod of the Church, the college was conducted with a very distinct and forthright purpose to nurture its students in sound and orthodox ideas. "The Classical Course," says a paragraph in the catalogue of 1867, "is the same as the Undergraduate Course of our best colleges; it will be pursued here, as it has so long been, as the regular introduction to the special professional study of Theology, Medicine or Law, and also as a thoroughly tried means of securing the culture and elevation of

mind, and of imparting the useful and liberal learning which becomes a Christian scholar."

And as to the newly created Scientific Course, the catalogue remarks:

"The trustees of the College are deeply impressed with the thought that our present collegiate system has grown up under the fostering care of the Church, and the relations of our old college studies to manly culture and religious training, have been studied by generations of Christian educators. They have therefore taken care that the new course shall not be removed from the old landmarks, and that as far as possible the old approved methods of instruction shall be used in all the departments of study. It will be found that the new course includes all the studies of the old, except the Ancient Languages, and it is believed that the method of teaching English and other Modern Classics, which has been for some years in use in the College, may be so adapted to the students of the new course as to give in a good degree the same kind of discipline that is derived from the study of Greek and Latin."

And then, as though to quiet any unrest in ecclesiastical circles, the comment on this course goes cautiously on:

"It is perhaps scarcely necessary to add that the Board intend that the whole Scientific Course shall have the Christian character

which they have endeavored to impress upon the studies of the College, and that science shall be here so taught as to become the handmaid of religion. All the departments will be in the hands of Christian scholars, who will not fail to improve, in their various instructions, the opportunity constantly recurring of directing the student from Nature to Nature's God. But in addition to this and also to the systematic and thorough study of the Word of God in all the classes, both of the Classical and the Scientific Course, special lectures will be given upon the connection of Science with Revealed Religion, that the student may be thoroughly informed upon the issues that are made, and be prepared to meet the arguments from Physical Science, by which our common Christianity is usually assailed."

Prayers were held in the college chapel morning and evening and "preaching on Sabbath afternoon," and at all these times the students were required to attend. On Sunday morning they could go to the church of their own choice in town. John Meigs was already by inclination an earnest-minded lad, and attendance at religious service was for him by no means a perfunctory necessity. He used to go to the Episcopal Church in the mornings, and sang in the choir. In his fundamental convictions he agreed with those great ideals of Christian truth which the college was founded to cherish, but he was somewhat

JOHN MEIGS, AGED EIGHTEEN

restive even then at the narrowness of some of its teachings.

With the mental power which the rigorous preparation he had had under his father's guidance gave him, he threw himself with determined perseverance into the work of his classes. In a letter written some years after he left college is this paragraph:

"In looking over countless papers that have been accumulating for years, I found one of my old college reports. One fails to attach much value to these things after so many years, but I shall always remember the glow with which I received these reports in my youthful days, and how earnestly they would be anticipated as if my eternal state was contingent on certain combination and permutation of figures; and yet in work, for I was but a child in those days, I never thought much of the measure of others' estimates, but to find my own pleasure in doing, as cleanly as I could, the weekly round of duties, and wish for more, and so it went on until more came, and with the increment of work came the enlargement of capacity and desire for something to satisfy my love that underlay my work."

In the fall of 1868 his mother wrote to him:

"I expect, my Dear Boy, you are doing your very best as a student. I fear that you will not exercise enough. Do not fail of

spending a couple of hours in smart exercise in the open air. Take hold of baseball or some such sport for one hour at least. Convinced that our dear Eddie's life was shortened by his close student habits of the two months preceding his death, I feel strangely anxious that you use every precaution that will strengthen and establish your health. Your father's life of suffering has all originated in his unwise student habits. Avoid the evil, choose the good. . . ."

As to whether he followed her advice in regard to athletics or not there is no record, and it is to be remembered that in those days there were no such organized forms of college sports as are familiar in America to-day; but at any rate, he was a healthy, active lad, who grew naturally into his manly strength, and impressed his companions with his energy and vigor. The last words of her letter he certainly did make true—he avoided the evil and chose the good. All the men at Lafayette who knew him remembered him as clean and upright, free from anything low and mean, wholesome in all his influence.

In this essential goodness of his there was nothing in the least aloof or unnatural. On the contrary, he was full of the instinct of human fellowship—light-hearted, fun-loving, sociable. He was a member of a trio who sang together, and were in the habit of going

about serenading the girls of the town. Among the men, he was known and loved for his quick humor and his vivacity. Some of the professors at the college, however, used to seeing piety go in more sober garb, could not understand that beneath his laughing and impulsive exterior John Meigs carried the heart of earnestness which was really his. Some of them looked at him askance. One of the oldest professors had often been outraged by his fun-loving spirit, which showed itself in an irrepressible desire to say amusing things to the general upsetting of the class. Once something was thrown across the room —a thing which John Meigs had not done and would not have done—but the poor professor turned in great excitement to where he sat, and indicating the missile which lay on the floor, exclaimed, "That fell here, but," pointing directly to him, "it came from there, John Meigs!"

And the friends who really knew him rejoiced most of all in the solemn concern which another member of the faculty expressed about him. Mr. David Bennett King, one of John Meigs' classmates, tells the story.

It happened that there was a great revival of religious interest in the college, and one of Meigs' classmates who had been opposed to religious exercises and meetings, and to re-

vival sermons and prayer meetings in particular, finally became interested, and went to consult Dr. Coleman, a very distinguished, pious and venerable clergyman, the professor of Latin, and at that time past eighty, thinking that it would be of great interest to hear Dr. Coleman's views on the religious movement and revival, then so widespread among the students. After the interview, which was a long and most earnest one, as the student was going away from the Doctor's library, the Doctor asked very seriously:

"Mr. S——, I wish you would tell me something.

"Well, sir?"

"I wish you would tell me confidentially, has Meigs reformed?"

But the most intimate glimpse of the high-spirited lad whom the sedate old Doctor thought in need of reformation, comes from the recollections of two very dear friends whom he met first during that time. One of these was Mrs. Helen L. Drown, whose husband, Dr. Thomas Drown, came to Lafayette in 1874. The story of what followed is best given in Mrs. Drown's own words:

"My husband had just been appointed to the Chair of Chemistry in Lafayette College. Until we could move our household effects to enter upon our new home, he established his

headquarters in the college, and joined some of the junior professors who took their meals in a boarding-house on the campus. From thence I received the enthusiastic message, 'You should see John Meigs!'

"When we were finally settled in our new surroundings, John Meigs came to tea with us, and from that time became as one of our household. His *bonhomie,* winning smile and social gifts made him a charming companion, and as acquaintance progressed, his delightful fun was a constant source of joy. He said once to a mutual friend, 'They know how to take all my nonsense.' And indeed we did. It was fun purely his own, bubbling up with sparkling explosions of wit. His power of repartee was lightning quick. At the boarding-table, being asked if he would take some doubtful lamb, he said in an audible aside, 'That's right, call it pet names.' Speaking of an acquaintance who had too great a fondness for whiskey, he said, 'If you threw a cork in his back yard, he would go out and follow up the scent.' To another who inquired when he intended to open his kindergarten, he replied, 'Don't you worry, I'll let your mother know in time.'

"With all his wit and fun, there was the keenly critical side. How easily he summed up people in a few short words, describing them exactly;—and the lovable side, which made him pick up his little friends and kiss them in the street—his love of beauty, of flowers and home refinement. His taste was fastidious and correct, both as to appearance

and conduct. A great source of pleasure to us was his music, his hands fell with such natural harmony on the piano, and he had a charming collection of songs to which his glorious voice did full justice.

"With the heart of the boy and the soul of the man he passed on his way, full of life and vivifying the lives of all around him.

"When the time came for him to assume the new duties of The Hill School, it found him with a mind well prepared, young as he was, and he entered upon his new work, full of courage and determination. I shall not forget his leave taking. In one sense it was the departure from the sunny, care-free side of life, and as he turned away his heart was too full to speak the farewell words.

"Many delightful visits followed, generally announced by characteristic telegrams. 'Will be with you for evening devotions,' and such like. It was our custom to adjourn to the dining-room for refreshments before dispersing for the night, and talk, grave and gay, went round the table. My husband humorously called the various helpings, 'rectifying the frontier.' In winter time, mince pie was the favorite *pièce de résistance,* and one night, during these week-end visits, mince pie was requisitioned. Alas! the cupboard was bare of the favorite dish. 'What!' was the exclamation of incredulous amazement, 'no mince pie!' A hasty consultation ensued. The servants had retired, the range was out of commission for the night, but nothing daunted, the ingredients were quickly col-

lected, the draughts put on, and in less than half an hour we were in the dining-room again, 'rectifying the frontier' amid great applause and approval. We loved to please John, he was so appreciative. It was at one such time that John heard of several new pupils from the West who were to enter The Hill School. Opening the dining-room door, he called to an imaginary waiter, 'Zwei Milwaukee,' in triumph. It seems impossible to describe the serio-comic manner and voice which accompanied these outbursts.

"At another time when he was leaving us, and the carriage was at the door to take him to the station, he descended the steps and with the air of a grandiloquent magnate called out, 'To the bank!' but our Irish Peter was equal to the occasion and replied with amused indulgence, 'Now then, Mr. Meigs, you get in and none o' yer nonsense.'

"One Christmas was made memorable by the advent of 'Uncle Remus.' We read him round the wood fire, thoroughly enjoying the sayings and doings of the woodland creatures. John suddenly took his departure for New York one afternoon because he thought someone was interfering with a cherished plan. In a very short time the telephone rang out the message we were waiting to hear, 'Brer Rabbit suspend Brer Fox in de elements,' which announced his satisfaction."

The other intimate friend of these years, who came afterwards to be the very closest and best-loved friend—outside the immediate

family circle—whom John Meigs cherished, was Mrs. Sarah D. Raymond, the wife of Rossiter W. Raymond.

Thus she writes of her memories of the days when he was still at Lafayette:

"When first I knew John, I think he was just nineteen. I met him at Dr. Thomas Drown's, at Easton. We lived at Durham, Pennsylvania, in the summer time, right across the river from them. He used to come over almost always unexpectedly. My children were all little, the youngest being a baby about two years old, and whenever he came, from the great-grandmother of the family down to the baby, servants and all, it was a day of rejoicing. They all loved him and loved to see him come. A shout used to go up, 'Oh, here comes Mr. Meigs!' and everything else was dropped for the pleasure of seeing him, hearing him talk and laugh and sing. He had an exquisitely tender and sweet voice at that time, and had a beautiful touch on the piano, just a natural touch, playing everything by ear, but when he began his songs, whether they were sea songs, war songs, love songs or cradle songs, there was always a large chorus which helped him along. Everybody loved him, the servants fairly worshiped him, and he used to sing Irish songs when he thought they were listening, just to please them. He was always thinking of other people and doing what he thought would please and make them happy.

"He was slender and very active and could do anything he wanted to but dance. However, one of the youngest of the little group used to insist upon it that she could not dance with anyone but Mr. Meigs.

"He felt himself perfectly at liberty at our house, therefore we saw the very tenderest and sweetest side of his nature.

"My youngest child, little Dwight, having been a great invalid during his babyhood and rather fretful, was instantly quieted and delighted the minute Mr. Meigs appeared. He was beloved by every child that came near him. He could lure the most bashful or naughty child to him.

"My husband was superintendent of some iron works, and at one place he used to pass there were about a million little children who used to gather there, perched all around, and they would watch us as we passed. One day Mr. Meigs was with us, and when he saw these poor children he said, 'I am going to buy all the candy there is and give it to these children.' He had a heart full of love for little children, and my little invalid, captious boy, with a high temper and a great deal of wit, chose him instantly as his hero."

Then follows this story of a conversation which might have fallen upon grown-up ears with a shock had it not been so full of the innocent naiveté of a little child:

"One Sunday, it being stormy, the children stayed at home and I said I would have Sun-

day school for them. My little Dwight was only four years old. His sister and brother were in the class, and I began and asked the usual questions, 'Who was the first man, and who was the first woman?' Then I said, 'Now I am going to ask you a question that is not in this little catechism, and I want you to think it over very carefully. Who was the first person that God ever sent into the world, He was so good that anybody who loved Him would be made good, and He could do anything He wanted to help people?' and the baby replied, 'Mr. Meigs.' The other two children giggled with surprise. I responded as seriously as I could, 'Oh no, my dear!' and in a most indignant tone he said, 'Who, then?' I said, 'It was Jesus Christ,' and he turned around to his little sister, who was still smiling, and said in a loud whisper, pointing to me with scorn, 'Mudder said Jesus Christ: I say Meigs!' When I told Mr. Meigs, he laughed, with tears in his eyes.

"On another occasion, when we had a telegram from Mr. Meigs that he was coming to visit us, the little boy was asleep when he arrived, but when he heard the rapture of the welcome, he dashed out of his crib and rushed downstairs and cried hysterically, 'I knew you came, I knew you would come, I kept knowing you were coming,' clinging to Mr. Meigs' knees and looking up into his face. We all moved away and could say nothing, but Mr. Meigs took him up in his arms and went out on the piazza, and they both cried

together. He was only about twenty-two years old at that time."

In 1871, he graduated from Lafayette with honors, and went back to teach under his father at The Hill for a year. This was, however, not the beginning of his permanent connection with the school, for in the fall of 1872 he was back at Lafayette as an instructor of modern languages. In 1875, he was made adjunct professor in this subject, and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the commencement of 1876.

As a teacher he left his mark. An honor man of the class of 1878 who was in his classes described his experience thus: "Knowing that questions would be fired at me so thick and fast that I should be unable to think out the answers, I prepared the lesson so carefully that I could not fail, and should not need to think in making the answers."

It was in 1876 that John Meigs finally left Lafayette to go back to The Hill—this time to remain. His return came about through an appeal from his mother.

In the years since The Hill School had been opened, it had been not chiefly Dr. Matthew Meigs himself, but his wife, John Meigs' mother, who had been the mainspring of its life. With rare sweetness and efficiency she

gave herself in tireless unselfishness to her manifold duties as mother of her own family, and mother to all the boys of the school. She had eleven children of her own, and her room was nursery and playroom and schoolroom, too, for the smaller ones whom she taught herself. Dr. Meigs went seven times to Europe, and was for a time the United States Consul at Athens; but she never left America, and seldom in term-time left The Hill. She was housekeeper for the school, and carried all its affairs upon her mind and heart; she watched over the boys' welfare, and even up to the time when the number of pupils had grown to fifty, she mended all their clothes.

Yet, most remarkably, she never suffered the pressure of her routine work to take away the freshness of her interest in literature and music and all beautiful things. When she was such a little girl that she could not see over the gallery rail, she sang in the choir in the old church of her home town, Torrington; and she continued to sing in the Presbyterian Church at Pottstown until she was sixty years of age. She gave music lessons at The Hill for many years. And meanwhile, she somehow found time for wide reading—in history and biography, and among the English novelists.

Underneath all her activities and her other

interests, lay the deep springs of her religious life. She belonged to the Presbyterian Church, but she loved the Episcopal Prayer-Book, and every day read to herself—out of a book which at her death was worn almost to fragments—the morning and evening prayer. Amid the cares of the school, and her selfless ministry to her erudite and brilliant, but eccentric, husband, she kept in spirit and in face a serenity, and in her bearing a queenly poise, which those who saw her never forgot.

Between John Meigs and his mother there was a very close and loving bond. In the years while he was teaching at Lafayette, he sent her each month $25.00 out of his salary to help her at the school. But now, in 1876, she needed the help of his personal presence.

Some time before, his father had put the school into the charge of his eldest son, George. But George Meigs had suffered a nervous breakdown, and the school was drifting without a leader. There was nothing left, therefore, but for John to come to the rescue.

To undertake the responsibility of the school had not been his choice. He had meant to be a journalist. But he accepted his duty with good grace. Since the work had fallen to him to do, he set out to do it with all the strength he had.

Although he had been for a period covering more than nine years at college as student and teacher, he was still a very young man. The commencement of that year, at which he received his doctor's degree, found him not quite twenty-four. He came away from Easton bringing the intellectual fruits of not a little hard work, and something also which he valued even more—the treasures of friendship which had called out his own warm-hearted devotion, and from which he was to receive in coming years inspiration and strength.

Yet it is doubtful if even his nearest friends at that time understood exactly the direction in which his abilities should most signally develop. They had seen much of his happy sociability, his tenderness with children, his good fellowship with men. They knew also, of course, his integrity and moral strength. But they could not know—because indeed the circumstances had not yet matured which called into expression—a kind of power in him which should characterize his coming work. They realized the force which had always been evident beneath his good humor. They remembered that he had hardly ever argued, but gave his opinion in short, decisive statements like a man who, being himself convinced, expected others to agree. But this element of his nature had not been conspicuous, because

in college no notably creative and constructive task had challenged him. Now, however, when he turned to face the problem of reorganizing and re-creating a weakened school, such a challenge did confront him. It was to call out a masterfulness and a personal authority which seemed to give his whole character a new aspect. In the ardor of his task, and in his intense determination to accomplish what he set himself to do, he was to drive ahead with an absorbing energy that sometimes should seem harsh to those who worked under his direction. The John Meigs who plunged into his new duties at The Hill was a more forceful, a more formidable person than the John Meigs at Lafayette; and he was going to need new influences to help him keep the balance of his nature and make the impetuous loving-kindness which was always a part of him able to sweeten still the strenuous exercise of his determined will.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE VENTURE

Headmaster of The Hill in 1876—The Meagre Equipment of the School—Financial Problems—Complex Responsibilities—John Meigs' Strenuousness in His Task—Rigid Standards of Work and Discipline—His Requirements for Masters—Comradeship with the Boys—Marriage in 1882—His Spiritual Self-Dedication.

THUS, with the strength and enthusiasm, and perhaps the self-confidence, of youth, yet with unusual maturity of mind, John Meigs came back from Lafayette, in 1876, to begin at The Hill the work which was to absorb henceforth, for thirty-five years, all the energy and devotion of his life.

To distinguish him from his father, the elder Dr. Meigs, he was called "Professor"; and by that title, made through familiar affection into a name, he was known by boys and men alike.

Neither John Meigs nor his father had any amount of money to invest in the school. There existed no group of other persons interested in its success and ready to back it with their help. The school had no connection—as some of the great schools of America have had—with churches from the ranks of which con-

stant support would come. It had no clientele to look to for endowment. It was a venture to the success of which only the determination and ability of the man who now took it in charge could contribute.

To succeed at all meant hard work and able management. If boys were to be drawn to the school, the school must be made such as would draw them. Only as the school should grow and prosper could the means be acquired to create the equipment which was necessary if the school should climb to commanding rank. The burden which rested upon the shoulders of the man who had assumed the school as his responsibility was, therefore, a complex and sometimes a very heavy one. Innumerable details crowded for adjustment. The problems were not those alone which the head of a day-school faces—who must see to the teaching of the boys as long as school hours last, but is freed from responsibility for them as soon as the last bell rings. For the head of a boarding-school, the building up of a system of instruction, and the supervision of it, are only one element in his many-sided task. He is responsible not for the mental culture only, but for the very life—in its simplest and most urgent needs, and its highest and subtlest possibilities—of the boys who come from many homes into his single trust. He must see

that they are properly housed, and properly fed. He must see that the surroundings of the school are kept wholesome. He must show in his choice of the masters who shall serve under him the kind of discernment that is able to find men who not only can teach their boys in the classroom, but can be examples of manliness and truth in the very intimate and exacting relationships of the whole school day;—and when he has found them, he must be able to get them to come. The eager visionary might dream dreams of a great school, nobly equipped and worthily manned; but visions alone would not suffice unless there should be joined to them the executive power and the practical skill to build them into fact. The truth of this confronted the younger Meigs when he took the leadership of The Hill. His father had been content simply to gather a few boys into his own home. He was too elderly a man, too much absorbed in his own studies, and with too much of his life's ambitions behind him, to attempt to create a great institution. But John Meigs had the eagerness and the energy which could be content with nothing less than large ends. And this meant, as he clearly saw, the necessity of making beginnings so sound and excellent that out of them the school should gradually finance and build itself, and thus offset the

limitations of poverty under which the work began.

But though the material element had thus to enter largely into his thought and plans for the school, John Meigs' spirit was never materialistic. When he sought to build up the fabric of the school by the only way in which it could be built up—that is to say, by the returns each year which an earnestly careful management saved over the expenses—the building of the fabric was never for the building's sake, but always that the school might grow better equipped to serve the highest ideal of its human usefulness. When there was a surplus at the end of a year's accounting, the satisfaction over it came not from the proof it gave that the school might be run with profit, but only from the way it opened for larger and more lavish expenditure upon the school itself the next year. There were many times when the finances of the young and struggling school were a sore burden; and because of the money that from the beginning had to be borrowed, this burden was never wholly lifted from John Meigs' shoulders; but through adversity or success he was true to what he said once to a friend who long afterwards remembered his words: "I am not in this to make money. I am glad I am not hampered and can carry out my own ideas and ideals. I am

working to have a school of the highest and best standard."

Into the interpretation of that ideal—"a school of the highest and best standard"—two elements of his nature pre-eminently entered. In the first place, there was his idealism, based upon and drawing its strength from his religious loyalty. He accepted his work at The Hill as no common profession, to be followed through ordinary motives to a selfish success. He took it rather with reverent hands, as one who receives—though his inclination had not turned in this direction to seek it—a commission for a holy service. He wanted to make the school a place where young lives might be lifted into nobleness, in which might dwell, and from which might go, only that which is high and true and good. This was one aspect. But with this, on the other hand, was joined the clear, and altogether efficient realization that to work out an ultimate ideal meant infinite care, and often exceedingly wearying patience and thoroughness in small details. The foundations of the school's life, even when they went down into the obscure and prosaic things, must be laid in the integrity of a purpose that counted nothing too small to be done well.

It was fortunate that Meigs had unusual executive capacity, and also an extraordinary

aptitude for hard work, for in these early days he needed both. The later development of his own systematizing, which divided the detailed responsibilities of the school among many helpers, with a business office and secretaries, and masters trained to assume charge of definite spheres of work and discipline, had not then been possible, and he himself had to superintend practically everything that was done. The most interesting feature of the material side of the school was, of course, the planning of new buildings, when these became feasible; and from the very beginning there was hardly a year during his head-mastership when he was not projecting or actually accomplishing some needed addition to the school's equipment. But there was much to be done that did not have the interest of new construction. He taught as many recitations as any one of the other three teachers who with himself made up the faculty—about twenty-five a week; kept all the accounts, drew all the checks, wrote all the letters with his own hand, personally attended to all matters of discipline, tardinesses and absences, sent monthly reports, calculated each boy's general average for the reports, personally saw all visitors to the school, and directed the work of the other teachers by conferences every day. Then the ordinary routine of living had to be kept in

its course, hungry boys had to be fed, and servants had to be found to take care of them.

Among his letters is this half-humorous, half-wearied and altogether revealing account of one day's particular activity:

"I feel like sitting down and 'boo-hooing,' for after this day and a-half of bleak, blustering blizzard, during which time I have trudged and travelled ineffectually in quest of a cook to suit us and save us the greatest of leakages, I am detained over a second night by the assurance from the intelligence office that as to-morrow will be fair I can certainly be suited in regard to cook and waitresses, but I am a-weary, and after going to the ends of the earth in New York must sit down and say, 'Nothing but leaves!' I never knew such weather, and how my knees have fairly groaned with the cold and weariness! I will not try to tell you all the details of my experience by letter; suffice it to say I have as yet not gotten finally on the track of just the person I need. To-morrow I shall come home with a big fish for next week's basket.

"P. is simply wild to have me go to the Twilight Club with him to hear him speak on poetry! Goodness alive! Think of my suffering—aching head, aching knees—and yet doomed to hear all of the poetical rant of this night. What I want—what I need (and I have told P. . . . this in vain), is rest, but he won't believe me. From eight until this

thing is settled I shall push towards cook and home!"

In the later years of the school's larger development, Meigs, of course, did not have to go personally hunting cooks, but even then his oversight was so inclusive that he knew the conditions concerning all the obscure elements of the school's life, and he could and would recognize and remedy inefficiency with a quick and summary authority.

He had his share of natural difficulties, too, in the organization of the school in its other aspects. When it came to choosing masters, his ideals, as we shall see, were high; but his decisions in this respect were made hard for him sometimes by his tender-heartedness. And when it came to a question of adding one more to the many lecturers and other special speakers whom he used to bring to the school, his generosity might outweigh his more deliberate desires.

In two of his letters are these passages:

"Dr. B—— has twice attacked me on the subject of my engaging him for next year, and in the usual impractical, argumentative, disputatious way that is enough to drive me mad. Poor man! He sees nothing but success and rare aptitude for our work and life in himself. It is an ungracious enterprise to prove to a man categorically that he is unsatisfactory—

not that he is not able as a scholar—but B—— is a German and that tells it all."

"H——'s visit was brief, but none too brief for me. With all of his ability he is an intolerable, conceited, self-absorbed, self-seeking lunatic. I fairly pity him, and yet would rather pity him at a safe distance. He came here in a dress suit, dirty collar, one white enameled stud in his shirt, which was shockingly soiled, no baggage of any kind, but some bad cigars and his book of poems, unwrapped in his hand, with rusty hat and rustier overcoat. I gave him a collar and a set of shirt studs, which I fairly cudgelled him into wearing in the gaping, empty holes in his shirt front, and loaned him every article for his toilet, and finally got him pulled into shape for the night's exercises. He made some preliminary remarks, full of self-complacency and depreciation of Emerson, Longfellow and Lowell, and then read his poems, which are certainly bright and thoughtful. The boys were delighted, as were most of his auditors. He is an original fellow. I gave him $25.00 and he left at 8:30 the next morning, much to my relief. His only theme of thought or talk was himself, and as he kept me up until nearly one o'clock, I am effectually cured. I am glad to have escaped so cheaply. It might have been so much worse. He has offered Lippincott's the poems for $10,000!!!!"

The necessary relationship with parents was another sphere in which the young headmaster

was put to the test. Here his sense of humor stood him in good stead. He could listen when necessary with solemn countenance, but inwardly amused understanding, to the elaborate explanations by voluble fathers and mothers of the peculiar virtues and peculiar needs of their unexampled children; and he wrote once:

"It is a fine thing to have boys come from South Dakota. The esteemed parents cannot be with you always, and the old gentleman cannot pass his time on the back fence criticizing the work and guessing at the combination of the hash."

Sometimes he had a startlingly effective way of dealing with the parents who were too much in the way. One obstreperous mother who had been packing up her boy's effects at the end of the year, invaded the Study at a very busy time, carrying a large military helmet which belonged to her son, and inquired, "Professor, how shall I get this helmet home?" He replied blandly, "You wear it."

In matters that touched reality he had a swift intuitive sympathy with the father's and mother's aims and hopes, and he spared no pains to create between himself and them a cooperation on the boy's behalf which was affectionate and eager. But at the same time he was definite and firm in his requirement that

parents as well as boys should conform to the disciplined order of the school. They should not take boys away for week-end holidays or in any other fashion interrupt the regular work and life except in agreement with perfectly definite and impartial rules. Nor could the wealth or influence of any parent avail to keep in the school a boy whom he thought to be an evil influence. In his first term at The Hill, when there might have seemed urgent need of keeping all the clientele he had, he dismissed the son of a man high in the nation's life because he thought that boy to be undesirable, though the immediate cause of offense was one which a man of less courageously clear purpose might have overlooked. Yet, on the other hand,—as some of the coming pages in this book will make vividly clear,—if he believed his duty to the school at large allowed it, there was nothing that he rejoiced in more than taking an unpromising boy, and for his own sake, and for his parents' sake, making him over into purposeful manhood.

For the first seven or eight years after he came to the Hill in 1876, he himself taught in the classroom. He was a thorough and accurate scholar in Greek and Latin, no less than in French and German, which he had taught at Lafayette. With the impetuous swiftness of his own mind ranging freely through the

literature which he assigned to his classes, he was often inclined to be unconscious of the tremendous tasks which he imposed on more plodding intellects. The boys regarded his classes with a mixture of admiration and terror. He drove at a furious pace through the hour, and boys used to say that they came out of his classrooms sometimes dripping with perspiration from the strain of his relentless questioning. His quick temper made him impatient of anything that suggested indifference and inattention, and in this he was no regarder of persons. One of the boys, between whom and himself there was a very special love, used to be sometimes very forgetful, and Meigs would burst out upon him: "You are too absent-minded. You will never be worth anything if you don't remember!" The boy's reply was naively genuine. "Professor, I wish you would not say I am absent-minded, my mind is always somewhere"; and he used to say, "You don't know how harsh Professor can be." But notwithstanding the dread the boys often had of the severity of his requirements, they could not but be proud of his tremendous thoroughness, and the enthusiasm for his work which lifted it up for himself, and gradually for them too, into a kind of noble—even if often austere—dignity. They knew that he was impartial, and altogether in ear-

nest. They knew that he scorned above everything meanness and deceit and shuffling evasion, and that he would never let them off until he knew that they had done the very best they could. One of the boys has left this comment on the kind of man he seemed to them to be:

"He certainly would get after me pretty hard, but then I deserved it every time. We fellows all knew that he would not stand anything that was mean and despicable, and knew how severe Professor could be at such a time, but we all loved him, and had nothing to fear when we did what was right."

Another wrote in the retrospect of the after time:

"It is full thirty years since I came, an unlicked cub if there ever was one, to The Hill. If outward things are the realities, it was a very different Hill then from now. There were a scant forty boys for a school. There was a small and rather dilapidated property.

"I think we were a pretty rough lot of material for the most part, in those very early days. School standards had not been set so high anywhere then as, through John Meigs and his few peers, they have been set since,—standards, I mean, not merely of scholarship, but of all the decencies and refinements of life and conduct. It was not the least of his

achievements that, even then, with his smaller experience, his poorer physical equipment, his discouragements of every conceivable sort, he took the rough material and fashioned it into the semblance of a man—gave it an ideal, a vision, a spirit."

Nearly all the letters and other personal papers of John Meigs which date from the early years of his work at The Hill were destroyed in the great fires of 1884 and 1890 (which wrecked the material fabric of the school and of which more will be said hereafter), and so it is difficult to gather much that expresses at first hand his own thought and opinions. But there are some fragments of different dates which show the characteristic attitude which he had taken toward essential matters from the start.

In his direction of the boys' work, he was anxious that they should attain excellence for the obvious worth—in the first place—of that excellence itself. He wanted the boys to be trained well, that they might know what they were supposed to know, and know it not superficially, but with mastery. He rejoiced, for the sake of the boys themselves and for the school, when they succeeded in college. "The college," he writes, " is what the boy makes it. It can give you as large and broad a culture as you need or are willing to strive for." And in

another letter to the same boy at college: "You don't say a word of your parents' feeling about your success in taking the prizes: don't you think I might be interested in that? Come now, my beloved boy, stifle your modesty and tell me about this in your next, like a man."

Once more he writes:

"We hear gratifying news from the boys generally. . . . The Yale boys are doing well in their work and will probably *all* stand in the first division, which is to be organized this week. . . . How comes on our work? Can you maintain yourself well in the sophomore class? If not, what are your special difficulties? Tell me a little about the length of lessons, etc., etc. Do you find the life over-full of distractions and temptations? Write to me, my dear old fellow, straight from the heart."

Between the lines, in these brief quotations one may clearly read the other interest which was deeper than the pride in the boy's scholastic triumphs in their academic aspect. He invested work with a moral quality. He thought of laziness and of the kind of failure which ought to have been avoided as an inward as well as an outward reproach. He valued achievement most of all for the sake of the kind of character which the winning of it necessitated. It was because of this that he

could often be so inflexibly stern in the requirements which he held to in his dealing with boys in the school.

He writes to a father concerning a boy who was shirking his work, and trying to have his father take him out of school, or else have him dropped into lower classes:

"I believe not in the 'divine right of kings' but in the 'divine right of fathers.'

"I should instantly take this ground with F—— and insist upon his compliance therewith before any other question should be considered, such, for instance, as his going to college.

"You have, whether wisely or unwisely, placed F—— here for the school year, ending in June, not for so long a time as he can keep in good temper with himself, his teachers or the boys. . . . Meanwhile, you expect, and will exact, that he shall give you the respect and deference that you are entitled to by availing himself, to the uttermost, of the privileges of education that you, at large expense, have most seriously, not lightly, been generous enough to bestow.

"You will listen to no departure from your maturely determined course for this year, and only his very best employment of his time, in the very best spirit, will afford him any reasonable ground to expect your consideration of his views with reference to the following years or the more remote future. . . .

"F——'s spirit is unpardonable. He should

learn instantly that he will be *required* by you to apply himself to his work, without reference to his temper toward himself or others, and to do, until June, just what other boys are required to do, both in the matter of work and of spirit. He has simply lashed himself into a bad mood, and would have us all endure his unreasonable spirit. As I have said, he should have no quarter in any direction until he has shown the disposition to honor your judgment and proper authority in placing him here and, by his submission and diligence, justified your listening to rational views, affecting his immediate or remote future.

"He would naturally fall into a lower Latin class, unless he has made up the Virgil when he returns, or manifests an energetic determination to do so when he gets back.

"As to other changes of his schedule, I should, for his immediate or ultimate good, decline to consider them now. . . .

"The matter of studying this subject or that is of comparatively little moment alongside of his simply doing as well as he can, in the best spirit possible, his duty. . . ."

To another father whose boy had claimed at school that his efforts to learn Greek brought on "the family heart-trouble," he writes, in the first place, a description of the boy's health which,—with the exception of one or two days' indisposition, seems to have been sturdy enough,—and then, after detail-

ing the boy's actual status in his class, he says: "Of course, his heart disturbance may have resulted from this 'Greek nightmare,' . . . but I am inclined to think that his heart has been weak in purpose, rather than in power. . . . I will have a talk with Herbert, and try to re-inforce your own counsels; and hope that his heart and head will combine to reassure you as to his purpose and power to do Greek and every other subject well, as he gives to it his inheritance of power and pluck."

Concerning another boy who wanted to abandon a subject which he did not like, Meigs writes to the parents:

"The question has been transformed from an intellectual to a moral problem. If by shirking and dishonesty, W——, or any other boy, is to secure his self-gratification in an unwarrantable and ignorant prejudice against any subject that you or I may feel it desirable for him to prosecute, the integrity of his mind and character will permanently suffer. As the head of the school, responsible for the moral and mental development of those confided to my care, I should feel compelled to decline to allow the boy to do as he chooses."

Into his discipline he not infrequently brought the power of a sarcasm, which he could employ with terrific force. When he found himself faced in a boy with shiftiness

or insincerity or deliberate shirking, he could hurl against him a scornful invective which withered like a blast of lightning. In the early days of the school, he used this weapon often. As years went on, and his own nature rounded into a larger compassionateness, he used it less; but boys knew what it meant, and when they saw his brow darken, the guilty shrank.

Such was the sterner side of his attitude toward the boys and their work. But it was the sternness, not of harsh indifference, but of a high insistence, based on love. He could be wonderfully patient with the shortcomings or the dullness of any boy whom he believed to be trying to do his best.

One of the nearest friends of those early years recounts the following memory:

"The first time I came to visit the school was about the time there were twenty-five boys. His beautiful mother received me with great welcome because we were so identified with his interests, and I well remember how he came to me and said, 'You love boys so, I want to ask you something. What would you do to a boy who really does not seem to be able to learn?' I said, 'Is he lazy, or is he a shirk?' and he said, 'Neither, but he simply cannot learn.' I remember talking to him about a boy who could not seem to learn anything, and different professors had been pretty hard on this boy, and he was finally sent to the high-

est authority, and the little boy said to him, 'Professor, I don't know why you are all so hard on me, I study a great deal harder than anyone else, but I cannot understand.' And I said to Mr. Meigs, 'If I were you I would take such a boy alone and help him study his lessons for the next day.' I also said, 'Perhaps he is homesick; if I were you I would go in after he has gone to bed and talk to him,' which the Professor did, with the greatest tenderness, and when I saw him again he said, 'You don't know what results I got from that boy!'"

And in two of his own letters Meigs recounts two incidents which show on the one hand the feeling in the boys' hearts that they could find in him a ready and sympathetic understanding when they came to him with their difficulties, and, on the other hand, the glow of his own when boys did come to him with frank confession or appeal.

"I am sure," he writes, to her who was afterward to be his wife, "you will not be displeased to have me repeat what came to me as from H——. The youth was talking of his peculiar difficulties of temper, of training and study. He said, 'I never before really wanted to obey any man, but it is my greatest happiness to do just what the Professor would have me do.' Well, that is not very much, you may say, and it is not, in one sense;

but if I can get hold of one boy's heart for his real abiding welfare, it is very much for me and for him."

And in a letter to another friend he refers to a conversation they had had "as to the necessary element of faith and courage in our work here, leaving to the future the vindication of our efforts which might fail of recognition in the stress and strain of daily routine." "I think it was within twenty-four hours of your visit," he continues, "that B——, whose case you will recall, came to me entirely spontaneously and opened his heart to me absolutely and utterly as to his recent life and influence in the school, . . . deploring his faults, and appealing most pathetically for the sympathy and co-operation that he knew he would receive from me. Since then his spirit and attitude have been above reproach, or even question, and he has come heartily and happily . . . to such an appreciation of his duty, and his privilege too, as when we talked together seemed most remote."

Another quotation from a letter, though somewhat obscure in part of its reference, is of value because it shows how merciful he could be in forgiveness, and how reverently regardful he was of the dignity of a boy's own right to freedom in his deepest choices, even when he felt the need of shaping those choices

in a very definite way. Evidently, in his thought, the wrong that this boy had done came from some influence that was undermining his religious loyalties.

"R—— reported to me in class yesterday morning," he writes," "that he had read all of his review in Latin; but last night, before bedtime, came to me and said, 'Professor, I told you a lie to-day, and I can't stand it. It's the first I have told here, and I feel very much distressed.' I talked with him as gently as I could, and then . . . tried to make him think of what he was doing . . . in subjecting himself to an influence that might impair his reverence for and belief in the faith in which his mother died and his family lived. He was honest and outspoken, and seemed impressed by my presentation of the subject which his, not my, conscience must decide."

He tells, too, in one of his letters, of an incident which is full of significance as showing the way in which he sought to build the discipline of the school upon the foundation of that which was deepest and finest in the boys' souls:

"Jan. 19th, 1882.

"You will be interested to know the step I have taken for, and with the boys. I have observed with keen concern the disposition of several of the older boys to tamper with stimu-

lants, the use of which, in the form of beer and light wines, is very prevalent in our state. They would stop at the inn, a mile or two down the road, on their return from a long walk, and drink a glass of beer or wine. The matter was in its incipiency, so that a decided stroke and an advanced position on the subject of liquor and its abuses would correct the matter, and radically, too. Last night every boy in the school pledged himself to abstain totally from the use of stimulants during his connection with the institution. In many cases, nine out of ten boys assumed this generous responsibility for the sake of their comrades, and I venture the assertion that the trifling evidence by which I proceeded has worked a blessed result in the immediate effect upon one or two boys whose past, prior to their coming here, made this lapse easy and natural. I thank God that my eyes were opened so soon, and that we have taken the high ground to which we are forever committed. I want you to understand that it was the faintest beginnings of the evil that I detected and corrected, I prayerfully trust. Many of the boys have access to liquor in their own homes, but the ultimatum on the subject has been pronounced here for all time. With the two boys who originally offended, I know I have begun a good saving work, and under God, our combined influence will enable them to repair the injury to which they would or might have drifted in the course of months. At any rate, whether or not there has been any real injury, it is a good, safe position for every boy to take, and I am heartily glad that

it was so readily assumed by all for each other's sake."

Later, he writes again:

"I appreciate your feelings with reference to my boys 'taking the pledge.' There was no compulsion about it. I submitted the facts to them and they voluntarily assumed the responsibility which I said to them could be no more sacred than any manly and worthy resolution—by God's help—to do and help the right. I think that the benefit derived from their position will far outweigh any possible violence to their honor by the breaking of any such pledge. I tried to have them regard it as no more solemn—for what could be—than a sturdy, prayerful purpose—God helping them—to do the right for the right's sake—and from my own experience with boys I confidently expect 'a lifting up of the hands which hang down, and of the feeble knees.' God help them and us all worthily to serve them. . . . Thank God, I am very much occupied with my school—and I have no higher ambition than to do worthily what devolves on me right here by God's own appointment. . . . This afternoon, instead of the regular final lessons, I shall have a plain familiar talk with the boys collectively, and I shall try to tell them something about thoughtfulness as a duty, as a basis for which Psalm 119 will do very well, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way. By *taking heed* thereto according to Thy word.' "

One of the men who was a boy at The Hill in the days of which we are thinking, wrote of John Meigs:

"He could be stern. He could be witty or broadly humorous, and he could use his keen wit for the discomfiture of rebellion or misbehavior. Intellectual and spiritual weapons were all he needed to enforce discipline. I could not imagine him resorting to physical means. But his greatest weapon was his kindness. How well I recall the awful day when I publicly offended his high sense of dignity. To this day I can search my conscience and protest my innocence of any intent. But I had offended, and, miserablest of sinners, I was bidden to the Study. Its walls were so thick that the entrance was an embrasure of at least three feet. Once in there, and the door closed behind you, your chance of escape was about as good, in your excited imagination, as Rebecca's in Front De Boeuf's dungeon.

"Oh, the dear, kind man! In two minutes, after one or two choking sentences, we were in each other's arms. From that day I knew the sweetness of forgiveness."

And from another, who both then and afterwards knew John Meigs in a very intimate and loving way, comes this description, which is as searching as it is true:

"As I look back over the years, my personal memories of Professor have an ever-increasing

significance, and outweigh all that I ever received from him in the way of correspondence. It is hard to put these things into words: but I will try. The first characteristic that impressed me as a boy, and grew stronger with the years, was the tremendous authority of the man. One could not doubt the sincerity of his appeal for truth, honesty, industry and obedience. It was impossible to shuffle or make excuse for one's self; the only alternative was to take a position squarely on this side or on that. This dominating force of a superior personality is often offensive to weak natures. It forbids them to do wrong, and at the same time persuades them that they are right—a species of self-deception to which boys are more prone than their elders imagine. Therefore, when Professor won the unswerving loyalty of many, he failed to inspire others with more than a wholesome fear of the rod. However, that many of these very fellows came to him voluntarily in after years, showed that he had been a power in their lives, in spite of the strong persuasion of their worse nature to regard him as a tyrant.

"It was sometimes hard for Professor to reveal the gentle and generous spirit beneath his sterner aspect. He has told me that many a time his heart yearned over a boy, and he knew that the latter wholly misunderstood his attitude, yet he could not establish the point of contact. Sometimes he did force himself to a direct attack upon the boy's reserve, reticence or dislike, and when he did, seldom did he fail to give that fellow a wholly different

view of all things, and a wonderful revelation of himself. But more often he depended upon something in the way of an outward occurrence on which to base his appeal. Here he had an unerring instinct and felt himself on sure ground. It might be a trivial breach of discipline, a classroom incident, an athletic triumph or failure, perhaps a moral victory or defeat, which the boy had thought known only to himself. In any case, it led to a realization on the boy's part that Professor was the keen observer of his daily living, and was deeply interested in the outcome. His manner differed greatly with the individual and the occasion. Sometimes it was no more than one of those wonderful smiles, or a hand on the shoulder, just at the psychological moment when one needed to hear a word of cheer or encouragement or sympathy. And the action was better than such words; it spoke each, or all, of these things, as the need might be, and was so interpreted: more, it conveyed an intimation of confidence that was a spur to pride.

"On the other hand, he might descend like a thunder-cloud, sharp and sudden, upon a sleeping conscience, trusting that this rude awakening was the only thing that could reach the lethargic soul, already labored over to no purpose by other masters. Here was a side of Professor's character that I think was often misunderstood by masters as well as boys. He knew his actions were at times wrongly interpreted, but he scorned explanations. If he felt that he had been right, he was content to be misunderstood and to trust to time to justify

him. Furthermore, he was hampered by diffidence in anything that seemed to concern his personal relations to another, and abhorred the appearance of seeking another's confidence, support or affection. He has often said, to my knowledge, that this feeling made it very hard for him to speak to any number of men or boys in a body, unless he had a very definite text or occasion. He had so much in his heart that he should have wished to express, yet feared to produce the wrong impression. The evidence of this was shown in two ways especially. One, the intense devotion he showed to those fellows whom he had never to seek, who understood him from the beginning, who feared him not, who offered their affection frankly and without reserve. He looked for them at reunions, he was disappointed—few knew how much—when one or another failed to come. Blessed be they, for, even if unwittingly, they did much to make his life a happy one. The other way in which he showed how deeply he felt the personal relations of life, was in the instant whole-hearted forgiveness he always accorded the repentant. It seemed as if he was twice glad: both that the boy had come to a nobler view of things, and that he himself, in doing his duty, had not lost a friend.

"Many times I have been thankful that my first week in the school revealed this side of his nature to me. It was for what to me seemed a very petty thing that I received a tremendous rebuke from him, in a manner that seemed to say he had no interest in me as a human being, but was merely angry at my actions. But

when I had duly considered the matter, and realized that in doing what I had done, I was doubtless taking the first step on a very easy and dangerous road, I felt the inclination to go and thank him for what he had said, but I couldn't quite summon up courage.

"However, and this is the most significant fact connected with that otherwise ordinary enough occurrence—Professor had not forgotten me and my small troubles! In some mysterious way he knew that I was ready to surrender, and made it as easy for me as possible by giving me a friendly nudge in the ribs as he overtook me in the hall. Somehow, it seemed that I quite naturally walked on into the Study with him, and there laid a real foundation for my life."

Even in these years, when he was still a very young man, Meigs was beginning to be recognized outside the immediate circles of The Hill for the power as a schoolmaster that he was. He used to go often with some friends in Brooklyn to hear Henry Ward Beecher, and one Sunday, after Mr. Beecher had preached a wonderful sermon, Meigs said, "I must go and thank him for that sermon." One of the friends who knew the great preacher pushed Meigs ahead, and as he stepped up to Mr. Beecher, he said, "Mr. Beecher, I want to thank you for that sermon; it was just what I needed." Mr. Beecher

looked at him and said, "I don't know your common name, but you're the boy-man."

In order, however, that the school should be efficient, it was necessary that Meigs should possess something besides success in his direct relationship to the boys as teacher and master. He had to prove himself able to organize the life of the school so that it should be adjusted with sureness to his desired ends, and to plan the system of teaching so that the work of a number of men should be combined into efficiency.

In the beginning, when the school was small, and equally in later years, when the school was large, the clearness and decisiveness of his thinking served him well. He was never a person who projected general plans in a vague way, and left them for the general drift of things to carry through. He held plainly in his own mind, and he made plain to others, what he expected, and as a result both masters and boys could know their duties with precision.

The order of the school day and of the school year was shaped in the early years substantially as it remained afterwards. In the morning, at six forty-five, or seven, according to the time of year, the bells rang in all the halls. Twenty-five minutes later, the bells rang

again, and the boys on each hall reported to the master resident there, to show that they were ready for breakfast—for which they assembled in the big common dining-room of the school, three minutes later. After breakfast, came prayers, in the schoolroom, and the beginning of the study and recitation periods, which lasted, with two brief recesses, until one forty-five. In the winter time, from Christmas until Easter, the morning school session came to an end at twelve forty-five, and the last two periods began at four-thirty, ending at six, a quarter of an hour before supper. This was in order that the boys might have their play-time all in the hours of daylight, before the dusk of the short winter days came on. Supper was at six-fifteen, and after it, evening prayers in the schoolroom. Then from seven to nine came a period of two hours of study. [At this time, and also in the morning, in the hours when they were not due at recitations, the boys studied in the schoolroom, under the charge of a master, except the sixth formers and the boys who had attained good rank in their studies and had no demerits. These were allowed to study in their own rooms.] From nine to nine forty-five, the boys could visit in each other's room, on the same hall, or in the master's room, except in the case of the little boys, who went to bed at nine. At ten o'clock,

except for the sixth form, lights went out, and the day was over.

The boys were held responsible for all the regimen of the day. They must be where they were supposed to be, and there on time. Disobedience of the rules, or lateness anywhere, meant, of course, demerits,—and fifteen demerits meant the loss of privileges—the necessity of studying in the schoolroom, instead of one's own room, and "confinement to bounds" of the school grounds.

In the classroom work, the masters were required to mark each boy each week, according to the rank he had attained in the average of his daily recitations. These marks were the "lists"—A, B, C and D. A "D" list was the dreaded "fourth." Monday—instead of Saturday—was the weekly holiday of the school, but on Monday, immediately after the morning prayers, the fourth lists were read out by the headmaster in the schoolroom; and many a boy, uncertain of his record in the week ending with the previous Saturday, listened with bated breath as the ominous list of names drew near in its alphabetical descent to the point at which he might hear his own. "Johnson—Geometry, Latin; Lloyd—Greek"—the relentless record might proceed;—and Johnson and Lloyd would turn at this mournful confirmation of what they had probably expected,

to study an hour and a half on each subject, while Jones, who had waited with dread for the sound of his name in between, cracked his heels together underneath his desk to know that he was free.

The school year was divided into three terms —the fall term, from the opening in September until the beginning of Christmas vacation; the winter term, from New Year's till Easter time, or at least until the end of March—for Easter might fall later; and the spring term, beginning after the Easter holiday and lasting till the close of school, in June. At the end of the first two terms, there was a reckoning like that of the Monday mornings, only on a larger scale. There would be examinations for every subject and every class, but every boy who had attained a certain grade of scholarship in any class for the whole term was excused from the examination in that subject. This meant that the more industrious boys might be excused from every examination, and start for home almost a week earlier than their less fortunate comrades, who were ensnared in the toils of their now too-late-repented delinquencies. For the boys who could not start with the group which was altogether free, there was still opportunity, however, for hard work to be immediately rewarded. If a boy passed in the one examination, or the two, or

the half-dozen, for which he was held, he could leave for his holidays immediately the master in the last subject had O.K.'d his paper. If a boy failed, he was given a condition for as many hours as the master thought he needed to study. After that length of time put in work, the boy was given another examination. If he failed again, he was conditioned again, and so it might be that some boys might spend the whole week after the departure of the first boys in their efforts to clear their conditions off, until the day when for everybody the vacation began. In June, all the boys, without respect to previous standing, had to take the final examinations; and after the commencement, which came about the middle of the month, the fifth and sixth form boys remained some two weeks longer for special work in preparation for the college examinations, which the proctors brought down from Harvard, Yale and Princeton and other colleges late in June.

In this arrangement of the school there was, of course, nothing outwardly unusual. Many other schools have the routine of the days and the terms ordered in the same general way. But the thing which the boys at The Hill came almost at once to feel was the extraordinary degree to which the personality of John Meigs pervaded the whole system. His thorough-

ness, his decisiveness, his determination, were all through it. In every rule and requirement, the boys knew that they faced not an abstract code which they might respect or not with only perfunctory consequences, but that they stood confronted rather by the spirit of a man who was lifting up in all their tasks a living ideal which he willed to be obeyed. Many a boy who on Monday morning listened to Meigs' voice reading out his name among the "fourth lists," and turned to take out his books for the hours of his penalty, directed against the headmaster personally the hot resentment which stirred in his heart against the discipline that held him with such inexorable grip. Yet even in those hours the same boys came to learn a deeper lesson than their books could teach—the lesson of the dignity of duty, and the sureness of that penalty which sooner or later in this world must overtake unfaithfulness; and learning it, they began to understand that it was through John Meigs that it had come home to them, and in John Meigs that it was made real.

In his relationship with the masters, Meigs could seem often to show the same kind of rigorous insistence which, on their plane, he showed to the boys. He had unyielding standards of the quality of work which ought to be done, and of the earnestness which ought

to be put into it. His own enthusiasm made him give himself unsparingly to what he himself had to do.

"This morning reveals the first snow of winter," he writes in one of his letters, "and I am rejoiced to see it, for it means for me a quickening of working forces; I can accomplish twice as much during the four months of winter as I can hope to in any other similar period of the year. I really wish that my work here might go on unremittingly for months to come." As a matter of fact, he worked so hard that he was often very tired when vacation came, and thoroughly glad to welcome it; but he forgot this when he was in the midst of the exhilarating pressure of the work itself; and as a consequence,—though without the least intention of being unduly exacting,—he was apt to key the work up for others, as well as for himself, to a point at which men who did not try to understand his spirit and purpose might have begun inwardly to complain.

In the early days of his headmastership, much more than in the later ones, there was room for the men who served under him to feel that in the tremendous intensity of his concentration upon the work which he wanted to get done, he sometimes set requirements which, from a more inclusive point of view,

seemed unreasonable. For instance, it was his custom to have the masters, at the close of the school hours every Saturday, make up their lists as to the boys' standing, in order that all these might come in for his own record and inspection. He would announce that the masters would meet "immediately after dinner," and at that time he expected every man to be prepared to answer, with no uncertainty, the standing of every boy in his division. As the week's final marks could not be made up until after the classes on Saturday, this meant that the men must have the record of what they considered the boys to have deserved on the previous day clear in their minds, and that they must work with speed and promptness to finish their reports in the few minutes between the ending of the last class and dinner. The worst of the matter was that the necessity of being ready "immediately after dinner" sometimes seemed to involve a hardship which was not necessary. If Dr. Meigs was not himself interrupted by an unavoidable cause, his "immediately" meant exactly what the word said; and because the men knew that, they had to be ready—even though this involved snatching a very hasty dinner to gain time for their figuring, or, in the case of one married master, who lived just outside the school grounds, frequently missing dinner altogether. Sometimes

when they hurried thus, the "immediately after dinner" turned out to be some fifteen or twenty minutes later than usual, because Dr. Meigs was kept at dinner by the necessity of talking to a visitor at his table. To half-hungry men, the authority that thus held them to its bidding may have seemed arbitrary, and no doubt it did.

What these meetings of the masters were is well told by Mr. George Q. Sheppard, who came to The Hill in the seventh year of the school, to become, as time went on, one of the men on whom John Meigs most depended.

"Already in 1883 no one could fail to be impressed by the fact that The Hill School was Professor's life work, into which he was throwing all his energy, for which he had the highest ideals of industry in work and play, of sound scholarship, of true purpose in masters and boys. Prompt, alert, indefatigable himself, he demanded the same of all about him.

"The first teachers' meeting 'directly after dinner' the first Saturday, the School having opened the previous Wednesday, was an awakening to the three teachers of the faculty, all new that year. 'Directly after dinner' meant when the Professor arose from the table after the midday meal. We had been told in the dining-room as we were at dinner that the meeting would be held. Without a word of explanation he opened the big record book and began to call the roll of the boys alphabetically,

expecting us instantly to report upon each boy whom we had taught during the half week, stating that he had made A, B, C, or D for the week, while he recorded our reports. Naturally there was hesitation in answering, since we had not been informed previously of the demand to be made upon us. Having finished the roll with some show of annoyance at our delays, he said, 'Gentlemen, we shall have such a meeting directly after dinner each Saturday, and you are to come prepared to report promptly on each of your boys. The meeting should not occupy more than twenty minutes.' There were sixty boys upon the roll; each of us, including the Professor, taught twenty-five recitations per week, generally teaching the last period Saturday, between which and dinner there was given ten minutes for preparation for dinner; yet we were to be prepared to report on each boy directly after dinner. The noteworthy point is that we *did it.* How often have I visited schools which needed a John Meigs to wake up masters and boys and show them what they *could* do, a point on which they seemed absolutely ignorant. Paul found out, 'I *can* do all things.' What a valuable lesson for any man or boy, a lesson, alas, which few have learned, but which men and boys always learned from John Meigs.

"This type of meeting continued 'directly after dinner' on Saturday until the roll became so long and the masters so many that the results could not be properly recorded even by the Professor, when reports in writing upon printed rolls of the School, to be handed in

before four o'clock Saturday afternoons became the rule, as it is to-day."

From this story there comes an impression of the John Meigs of the school's early years which is true, and yet which needs to be shaped by a balanced understanding lest it be unjust. In the outward aspects of his government, there was reason sometimes to call him arbitrary. He was strong and confident and masterful, and he established requirements which, even when they were difficult, he would not suffer to be disobeyed. But the fact that needs to be remembered is this—that his authority was never a petty self-assertion for its own sake. If he seemed sometimes not to spare others, neither did he spare himself. When he set a standard which was to be conformed to, he did not do it for his own convenience, but as part of his imperious sense of the demands of the most efficient work. His decrees were not shaped by an infallible wisdom, but they always were forged out of a fine honesty, and tried by an unflinching loyalty to purposes which were so commanding in his mind that they outweighed sometimes his thought of the convenience of others, just as they outweighed his thought of his own.

As the years went on, the gentleness and consideration, which were always so beautiful

a part of his deepest nature, more and more spread themselves through all his outward relationships. He could still be authoritative and commanding, but he more consciously and completely made it evident that not self-will, but his own submission to the great ideals of the school, into the obedience of which he would have them gathered with himself in noble fellowship, governed all his attitude toward the men who served with him.

One young teacher who came to The Hill straight from college spent three years in the school, and in that time made a notable success of his work. Dr. Meigs recognized this so thoroughly that he urged him to throw in his lot permanently with the school, and promised him enlarged responsibilities and an opportunity which the younger man knew he could not equal elsewhere. But he left The Hill, saying to himself as the final reason, "John Meigs is so forceful and overmastering, while I am naturally diffident, that I feel sure he will expand in character while I should shrink."

But another member of his staff said:

"Other men felt differently, remained, and have been given ample opportunity to express themselves. Professor demanded of every man undivided loyalty to the ideals of the school, all his time and energy in the activities of the school during the short school year, a

high measure of success in dealing with the boys in the whole circle of their lives as well as in the classroom, instant and whole-hearted obedience of all decisions, yet he was most careful not to strangle individual initiative, sought counsel and advice from the teachers, and constantly gave enlarged responsibilities and duties to men who seemed fitted to perform them. He cannot be understood without the knowledge that his consuming ambition was not himself but the school and its success in an idealized meaning of the word success."

Another of the masters who knew him best, Mr. Arthur Judson, wrote of him:

"After much thought, and after many talks with Professor on problems of personality that beset the school, I came to certain conclusions which were very helpful to me. In the first place, I believe that his ideal of organization was the military one, not that of the tyrant, whose privates, like the Persians of old, are driven to battle with the lash, but the army of liberation, inspired by the great Cause, honoring obedience as the law of salvation. In this, the assumption of responsibility was as important as the obedience to the superior. Each man's place and his duty was perfectly clear; he did not understand how any right-minded man could fail to perceive it. Our responsibility to the boys never ceased. If there were signs of insubordination, the man was there, he was clothed with full authority, it

was up to him to act with promptness and decision. Whatever was accepted as school policy was to be carried out without deference to some individual's likes or dislikes. But one master was not to be commanded or bullied by another. There was no question of precedence; as men, the youngest was on a par with the oldest. This matter of obedience was an impersonal one, it was obedience to the established law of The Hill, not to John Meigs, though the definite instruction might proceed from his mouth.

"New members of the force were to be given a reasonable time in which to 'learn the ropes,' as the saying is. After that, they must stand on their own feet. They were supposed to have certain qualifications as a *sine qua non*. Beyond that, all depended upon the spirit each put in his work. Professor once said to me something to the following effect: 'How can any right-minded man fail to see the greatness of the opportunity, the importance of the work, that should inspire us to act in unison? How can he rebel against the safeguards that we must throw around these boys? He should not merely be willing to observe discipline, he should be zealous that no least act of his should violate the regulations of the community and embarrass the efforts of everyone of the rest of us. It is astounding [he used that very word] that any man here should be afraid to face a set of boys, when every advantage is on the side of the man.'

"These were not his exact words, of course, but pretty nearly what he said. At another

THE HEADMASTER'S HOUSE AT THE HILL
THE STONE WALLS ARE THOSE OF THE OLD RESIDENCE, WHICH WAS THE ORIGINAL SCHOOL

time he said to me, 'We are not running a school for masters, but for boys. If we have to spend all our efforts in educating masters to their duty, we'll land in imbecility!'"

Most of the men who taught at The Hill understood his spirit. It was always his desire and policy to attach the men who had proved their worth permanently to the school, and thus build up a group of associates whose lives, like his own, were wholly identified with the work. These men admired him, loved him and rejoiced to serve at his side. And among the whole group of masters he was able to create almost always a spirit of loyal and happy co-operation. In such of his letters as happen to have been preserved from the first decade of the life at the school, the expression of his satisfaction frequently recurs:

In 1881 he writes: "In a fortnight the vacation begins, and I shall have the most satisfactory retrospect I have ever honestly indulged in. That there is so gratifying and cordial a feeling between boys and teachers and the lower constituents, is all I can ask, as far as generous work and spirit are concerned."

Early in 1882, after the Christmas vacation, he writes: "Everything is cheery and hopeful. A—— has decided to remain; that he has resisted the urgency of other institutions is most gratifying. He has said such satisfying things

about his association with me for six years, that I best epitomize them in the mere statement that he had declined the other propositions from the other schools that sought his splendid services. Our conference furnished me an opportunity of expressing my appreciation of his own work."

And again: "It is a deep pleasure to tell you of the gratifying progress of the school. I never felt so strong and ardent a desire to vindicate the generous confidence of its friends, nor have I ever known so assuring prospects of its growth within and without. Such helpers as I have had the singular fortune to get and maintain furnish the explanation of it all."

These quotations are from letters written to his wife-to-be. In the fall of 1880, he had gone to Durham, Pennsylvania, to visit his beloved friends, the Raymonds, and there he had met Miss Marion Butler, of New York. They became engaged in 1881. In 1881 and 1882, Miss Butler was studying abroad, and was in Berlin in the winter of 1882. A little before the close of school in that year, John Meigs left The Hill to go across the seas for his bride.

From Mrs. Drown—the same Mrs. Drown who knew him when he was at Lafayette—comes this familiar reminiscence of that time:

"The summer of his marriage found us on the ocean together, on the way to Berlin. By a series of misadventures, after arranging for a most comfortable crossing, we were changed from steamer to steamer, until finally we were forced to cross in the 'City of Montreal,' an old, slow steamer, sorely trying the patience of our expectant bridegroom. The voyage proved cold and stormy, and John was not a good sailor, but we still managed to get much amusement out of the passengers on deck, giving them fictitious names and characteristics. One, a little priest, who walked the deck with a tall brother, we found was a high-placed church official, on a mission to the Pope. He was so gentle and amiable looking, we called him the 'little dear,' and years afterwards John loved to allude to him. When Queenstown was reached, we bade each other a temporary farewell until we met again in Berlin, where opened for him the great, supreme blessing of his life. On meeting us at the station, he briefly summed up his disapproval of German red tape and officialdom, which fretted his active, impulsive spirit, and when we were mounting in the elevator in the hotel, he called out to the operator, 'Oh, do put in another teaspoonful of water,' so slow it seemed to us after our swift American methods."

When this old friend thus called his marriage the "great, supreme blessing of his life," she wrote no mere phrase, but summed up the high and beautiful truth. To the woman

whom he married, more than to any other human gift which came to him, John Meigs owed the stimulus of those gentler and diviner elements which shaped the original strength of his nature into the large and rounded beauty of the later years. Of her, since her eyes will read these pages, it is not permitted with fullness here to speak. When she came to The Hill, Mrs. Meigs the elder was still living, and so she was called "Mrs. John." As "Mrs. John," she has laid her touch, like an accolade, upon the heedless spirit of many a Hill School boy, and there are those who work with worthier manhood at their tasks to-day, because in unforgotten years the knightliness which slumbered deep within them rose in the thrill of its first awed recognition to meet the loving challenge of her eyes. What she has meant to The Hill School, only the reckoning of many lives can tell. What she meant to John Meigs, he only could express whose hands should hold those uncreated balances in which the values of a soul are weighed.

It had always been John Meigs' ideal to invest the school as truly as possible with the atmosphere of a home. The buildings, and all the physical conditions of the boys' life, were shaped to express this thought. The boys all came at meal times into the one dining-room, where the whole family assembled, headmaster

and the other masters, and all the ladies of the household, too; and they all bowed for the one grace as they sat down together. The masters lived on the different halls, in rooms surrounded by the boys' rooms, and the headmaster's house was a part of, and opened directly into, the buildings where the boys were. Whenever the boys wanted to talk with the headmaster himself, they had only to open the door that led into the passage outside his Study, and knock at his Study door. In particular ways, when the school was small, he used to be at pains to cultivate the informal and affectionate relationships between the boys and himself.

In a letter of 1881 he writes:

"I have just finished reading to the younger boys, and as the little fellows left me, so cordially grateful . . . the blessed possibilities of my work and its influence occurred to my mind anew to strengthen and stimulate me. . . . We had our usual gathering on Friday evening . . . and sang a number of solos and choruses. S—— played on his violin, and L—— accompanied us on the piano, and with this spirited chorus, we made havoc of æsthetics in true dragoon style. To one unacquainted with the true nature of boyhood, these familiar gatherings might seem profitless enough, but it is wonderful to observe their humanizing influence upon the least promising. I should as

lieve give up church of a Sunday evening, as far as the peculiar hold I get on certain characters is involved, and that too for their real moral good, as renounce these informal evenings with my boys."

He could enter heartily, too, into the boys' fun. In the winter of 1882 he writes: "A very heavy fall of snow has brought the finest sleighing you could imagine, and the air is resonant every minute with merry bells and merrier laughter. . . . The boys are in high glee, and yesterday afternoon I sent as many of them out riding as our vehicles would carry. To-morrow I shall take them all in large omnibus sleighs for a long drive, returning by eight or nine in the evening to a hot supper."

In another letter, he tells how he is about to go out coasting with the boys, and adds, "The boys are in such fine trim, in spirit and work—it is a great comfort to have them feel and act so."

The influence of John Meigs' mother went hand in hand with his to make the boys feel toward The Hill the home-love. His sister, too, Miss Elizabeth, played a great part in the life of the school. To her reception-room, at the corner where the family house faced the school quadrangle, masters and boys alike were welcome in the afternoons for tea. When the new Mrs. Meigs came, her spirit was added

to that of the mother and sister to help the man who bore the responsibility of the school to make it what his heart desired.

And from the first years onward, he did make it a place to which the love of his boys turned with an ever-deepening faithfulness. Instinctively, the school came to seem to them the embodiment of his personality. Their best memories of it were identified with memories of him.

In after years, one man, who was a boy of those early years, poured out his heart:

"The old boys only can know what Professor really meant to us, in those days when he was more closely in touch with each boy. Don't you remember the chafing-dish parties and the Sunday night reading hour in his study? Apples for all of us who lived on the second hall, and he would read—pausing every now and then to ask some pertinent question of some restless spirit.

"I am perhaps the last one in the world to say anything about influences—but Professor had a big one on me; it is being realized the more as I grow older.

"He used to be the stern headmaster, but you forget that, and only recall that, as he did, his boys do, in little ways. Not a Christmas has gone by since I left The Hill, that I haven't read the 'Christmas Carol,' by Dickens—he read it to us just before Christmas vacation, you know. This year I had my father sit out-

side the door and read it, as I was in quarantine with diphtheria; and as I listened, I kept thinking of the school, and of my four years there, and then I could hear, 'God bless the old fellows.' It was as real as though I were back at prayers.

"Oh, if we only realized, if we but could be made to realize, what those years are to the whole life, who of us wouldn't go back and relive them, and try to make them count as Professor desired that they count!"

And another writes:

"The real picture of the Professor, which always comes clear and distinct from the memories of the school days of one of the 'Old Boys,' is as he sat at his desk in the old schoolroom, of a Sunday evening, at song service, and the hymn I always associate with that picture is 'Ein' Feste Burg.' Eighteen or twenty years have not dimmed it in the least. That is what he looked and what he was—a firm, strong, kindly, helpful citadel. There seemed to be something in Professor's face as he came down the aisle at the close of those song services on Sunday nights, that I never quite caught at any other time—a something words will not tell."

Yet if any words would tell it, and the secret of it, perhaps they would be such as these from one of his letters in the early eighties:

"I had my usual talk with the boys before church. I do want to become more in my own heart, and more to them, in these vital matters that are their life and hope. God grant me grace and strength, and make me worthier in all these things."

CHAPTER V

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

Burning of the School in 1884—The School Rebuilt—It Passes Fully into John Meigs' Control—Birth of His Children, and His Companionship with Them—Travels Abroad, and Letters Home—The Second Fire in 1890—The Rebuilding of the School—Meigs' Spirit Under Difficulties.

UP to the point to which we have thus far carried the story of John Meigs' work at The Hill,—from 1876, that is to say, until his marriage in 1882, and for two years thereafter—all had gone prosperously with the school. Many difficulties and problems there had been, it is true, which he must meet and surmount; and there came, doubtless, many a moment of weariness, which threw its passing shadow on the bright activity of those years. One single expression of this mood lingers in his letters, in this paragraph written to a friend in great perplexity concerning his duties: "I have myself often, amid the surging and rushing tide of my busy life, felt the uncongeniality of so much of the life here that I have again and again felt as if I could almost deplore the fate that brought me back to my birthplace"; but that he himself realized, even in the moment of

writing, that this feeling had been only superficial, and never truly characteristic of his deepest instinct, is shown by the rest of that sentence,—" yet I have had an entirely healthy, and in the main, happy life . . . and have allowed none of the experiences which have been yours to modify my simple and spontaneous enjoyment of my home and its environment." And over against this sentence, with its partial reflection of the sense of restlessness under the burdens which now and then oppressed him, there stand many passages in even those few letters of his which are available, that show how gladly and buoyantly in the main he shouldered his responsibilities, and with what vigor he pressed forward on his chosen ways.

Here is what he writes from time to time in letters of the early eighties:

" You will rejoice with me to know how prosperously the school goes on in respect of its morale; above all things, there has been a minimum of the usual vexations to which we look for our discipline of heart and soul."

" To-morrow night we shall have the cherubs spend the last evening with us for this term. . . . The general sense of thoughtfulness will be focalized here, and therefore it has been my great joy to have several boys who sorely taxed my patience and faith for months, gradually emerge from the category of unfaithfulness,

and take hopeful pride in ranking with the faithful. On the whole, there is much to be encouraged by, and everything to be grateful for."

[January, 1882] "School began to-day, and there are sixty-four boys on the roll, of whom all but five are on the ground. This is doing well for the first day, is it not? And then I am so glad to be back at my work, and to have the boys returning so promptly and cheerfully."

In his achievement for the school, he had already overpassed the eager, but still hesitant hope, which was the best he dared cherish when he took up the work in 1876. Writes one of his friends:

"About the time that Mr. Meigs entered the small Hill School, the coming of more boys was such an event that he would come and stay a week-end in order to say, 'I have got two new boys.' I said to him, 'When you get twenty-five or thirty boys you will be satisfied, won't you?' He answered very hesitatingly, 'Yes, I think I shall be, but perhaps I would like fifty.'"

As he refers, in a letter of 1882, to new boys who were entering, and the general progress of the school, he writes: "It is certainly a blessed kind of bread, material and immaterial, to have come back after many days."

In 1884, the course of the school's development, which had seemed theretofore so steady, received what threatened to be its first great shock of arrest through a fire which broke out in the bitterest weather of winter. This was in the middle of the eighth year of John Meigs' administration of the school, which he had built up from a dozen boys to sixty, of whom forty-five were boarders. The buildings were the original old ones, which at various times since Dr. Matthew Meigs bought them in 1851 had been added to without any general architectural plan, heated by several furnaces in the cellar and lighted by a private gas plant. The family part of the building was of stone, the school addition of brick, and at the east end there was a small addition of frame construction containing wash rooms for the boys, with faucets and ordinary wash basins; there was no other running water for the use of either boys or teachers, and the whole was the simple, and, by modern comparison, the primitive equipment of the boarding-school of that day. In the preceding autumn, there had been built a frame gymnasium at right angles to the school building, and it was through a stove in this that the fire started. It happened that Mrs. Rossiter Raymond, whose intimate friendship with John Meigs had begun while he was at Lafayette, was visiting at The Hill at this

time. On the day after the fire, she wrote home to her husband a long letter telling him of it; and her vivid first-hand account is full of interest in the light it throws upon the spirit in which the "Professor" and "Mrs. John" and the school at large met this crisis.

"Pottstown, March 5, 1884.

"MY DEAR ROS.:

"Yesterday afternoon at 3, no one being in the gymnasium, one of the boys saw a slight wreath of smoke issuing out from the window back of the stove there. He watched it for a moment only, then rushed down to John in the study and told him he feared the gymnasium was on fire. Otto and Will also discovered it, and gave the general alarm, and all set to work with a will. But it took the fire engine so long to be notified and to get up there, besides which the plugs were so clogged with ice that before the men had arrived, we were all in fear for the dear old house itself, and abandoning the gymnasium all efforts were turned towards that. The boys behaved wonderfully; not one appeared to lose his head, and all accomplished a great deal. . . . The day was bright and fine, and the fact that it was day and not during the darkness of night seemed from the first to make me glad. Loss of life would have been inevitable had it been night, for the gas had to be turned off immediately to prevent explosion. I rushed into Mother Meigs' room but could not make her realize that the house was in danger, although

she was as calm and self-possessed as an angel. Then I went to Marion's room and helped a very little, and then into the boys' room, where Will and I hastily packed a few of his and Alfred's things into Alfred's trunks. Then Otto found me and I offered to go down and pack for him, but he said his room was already full of smoke. He and I stayed together in Alfred's room and Marion's, grabbing up what we could till Otto took me by the arm and said, 'Cousin Sally, you must come away; look at the smoke!' Sure enough, it was puffing out in thick blackness from the attic. I put a shawl over my face, and Otto led me down. I went into my room again, where a man was asking which things to save first, and gave him a few directions. . . . I slipped and slid down the steps, and then plodded out into the snow, where mattresses were brought for us to stand on. The baby was grabbed by a strange man and conveyed in a smiling condition over to a neighbor's, where she sat with a strange lady till they persuaded Mother M. to go too, which was a long time after. . . . She stood on a mattress with me, and except saying, 'Mrs. Raymond, this is my dear home; my children have been born here!' showed nothing but the most wonderful serenity, except that her beautiful eyes shone. She asked one man to see if the hams and barrels of sugar and other provisions could be rescued from the cellar as the fire was in the top, 'for,' said she, 'the boys will need them.' Different ones would come to her for directions where to look for particular things. . . .

"The boys worked like heroes; there seemed in all the hurry and confusion to be some one of them always near Marion, so that if she ejaculated, 'Oh! my baby's clothes!' or some kindred thought, a knight instantly started off for Mrs. John's baby's clothes! In one of these moments she exclaimed, 'Oh! boys, boys, my little old Bible! My cousin Edith gave it to me, I've always had it!' Well, I can't count the boys who went Bible hunting. It seemed to me the roughest boys were the ones that came oftenest with eager delight, with one Bible after another, to be met with thanks but the remark, 'Oh! that isn't the one! Never mind!' Back they would fly, and although I told them all for their comfort it would very likely be with the other saved books, it seemed to be like the 'Holy Grail.' Of course there were awfully funny things done, and it was a healthy thing to have to stop and laugh to see a man carefully descending a ladder with a beautiful vase in his arms, have a scrap basket descend on his head, scattering its papers, and completely enveloping his head, so some one had to climb up and uncap him. It is wonderful how much was saved, but I fear many things are badly injured that need not have been, and in spite of the boys watching, things must have been stolen. But there was more good will than bad, I am sure. Neighbors both gentle and rough exerted themselves to the utmost. The deserted seminary opposite was crammed with recovered goods. Finally when we were fairly exhausted, after being assured that John, Alfred, Will, Otto and Endicott were in no

peril, Marion and I wended our tired and half-frozen way over to the neighbor who had the baby to find her entry and parlors filled with saved bundles. Presently along came Will and another boy, with my trunk between them, and when Will saw me he roared at the top of his lungs, 'Oh! tell Mrs. John her Bible is safe!' It was one of the worst little scalawags in the school who had the honor of finding it, and I think the big boys were uncertain whether to embrace him or kick him! Although I never once caught sight of Alfred, they all said he worked well. I was proud of all my boys, and even of some boys whom I don't like. Poor fellows, some lost all they had in their efforts to help others, though I hope indeed it was not literally all, as the firemen threw a great many clothes out from the boys' wing, where the smoke was the densest, and lost things may be recovered. But one and all seemed to have but one thought of pity, and that was for the Professor. 'Oh! he tries so hard to do everything for us!' said one, and 'He's so splendid!' said another; and 'Just look at him never saying a word of complaint!' said another. And indeed John seemed glorified for the time: his face looked so exalted and noble that after one glance, upon my word I couldn't stand it to look at him for fear I shouldn't be able to do another thing!

"Mr. and Mrs. Stephenson (the minister and his wife) wanted John, Marion and the baby and nurse there. When all of us were there but John, it was found that Mrs. S. had been told by the neighbors to parcel out the

boys to them, and some took six or seven. The boys all collected in Mr. S.'s study to be billeted out, and such a lot of heroic scarecrows! Somebody sent in piles of dry stockings, and I made the boys put them on, though they could scarcely move their frozen shoes. . . . John told them to come to-day at nine, and he would be ready to tell them his plans. Then after crowding around him to bid him good-night, with shame-faced softness they all trooped off. Now began my usefulness, for most everybody was advising John to let the boys all go home at once, even if they reassembled in a week or two. Even dear Mother Meigs could see no other way out. I held my point firmly, at first privately with John and then bravely backing him up against the majority. This then is the plan as it stands now (which may be modified by people's unexpected coldness, but it won't be!). As there were accommodations enough offered last night for one hundred and fifty boys, and there are only forty-eight, I wanted John to boldly ask how many would be willing to give house room and board to how many boys apiece (the number needed being only two to a house), and let the work of reconstruction of the school instantly begin. Mr. Morris, living in Philadelphia now, offered his house, which is next to the seminary, for the entire winter and spring to all who could fill it. The seminary can be got right away. The boys' hearts are filled with that kind of eager sympathy that makes them long to help, besides which they are the very ones to sort their own companions' belongings. The boarding-out is

a picnic to them, and their enthusiasm is so roused for study, by John's resolve to have the school go right on, that I think they will do as good work as ever. The three assistants are like a tower of strength to John. They, as well as the boys, admire his grit. Many of the boys if sent home have parents who would either send them to other schools, or terminate their studies here. To see the boys' faces this morning in Mr. S.'s parlor while John spoke to them was a sight! He said they had done their kindest and best for him yesterday, in a way that made him determined to do the same by them, and not to be cowed by circumstances: that the fire which had destroyed valuable property had kindled a yet more valuable flame, which must not flicker and go out, but must illumine their whole lives. I tell you he spoke straight from his full heart, and well, and simply. John had a gentleman arriving late come to him last night, the father of one of his best boys, with another son to put at school. Said he, 'Professor, I am sorry enough to see this trouble! Shall I take my boy (the one he had just brought) home again, or will you keep him; which would you like best?' John said, 'Let him stay!' and the gentleman went off without him, very much pleased. That went right to my heart, it was such a pledge of trust. John says in answer to your inquiry if you can help in any way, 'Not just now!' Oh! how I wish now we were rich! Wouldn't I make this calamity into a blessing? Which perhaps the good Lord will do, without my help."

Mrs. Raymond's final words were prophetic. The calamity *was* made into a blessing through the courage and energy with which John Meigs faced the situation. He could laugh with stout-hearted humor in the midst of the disaster. "We are celebrating your arrival with a bonfire," he said to the astonished new boy who reached the school when its walls were tumbling into ruin.

Though the ground was covered with snow, and the March wind blowing, and though he did not know at the moment where family, boys or teachers would sleep, he said instantly that the school should not be suspended, but that its work would go straight on. He would find a way. The kindliness of the neighbors provided immediate shelter. The building which had formerly been the Girls' Seminary, and a residence next it were secured, and in one week from the day of the fire the school was thoroughly established in these two buildings. In June the commencement exercises were held in the new gymnasium, and in September the next session opened in a completed new equipment built upon the enlarged foundations of the old.

The fire was John Meigs' opportunity, and he seized it. His seven years at The Hill had revealed his power as a headmaster, and proved that he could create the answer to the ever ex-

isting demands for a school of high ideals in life, in industry and intellectual accomplishment. But he had been handicapped in the realization of his complete desires by the poor physical equipment which he inherited. Now he determined to hazard the costly erection of a school that should measure up to his ideals. So he built it with steam heat, hot and cold running water in every room, fully equipped bathrooms, and electric lights—being the pioneer among all the educational institutions in the country in the installation of what was then this new wonder of illumination. And when the boys came back in the fall, the re-created school was ready.

As after the fire the school made a new start in its physical equipment, so in the year following there was a new beginning in its formal control. Up to this time, the school had belonged, so far as legal title was concerned, to Dr. Matthew Meigs. The strange old man, haughty and imperious, dwelt apart in the isolation of his study, as remote from the world of the boys as some brooding Jove upon his misty Olympus. The actual conduct of the school and all real possession of it, he had long since delegated to the son. From the time when John Meigs came from Lafayette, it had been, in all essential respects, *his* school; but now, in 1885, he entered into formal possession

of it. On November 17th, of that year, he writes to his wife, who happened to be away from The Hill:

"Father signed a contract this A. M. to sell the place, and I am now sure to become owner of it January first. It seems like a dream. Can you believe it? God make me wise and strong to administer faithfully this new, and great, and blessed trust. We now have a distinct and noble object on which to concentrate our aims and efforts and prayers. I feel as if I had been born into a new world."

In the new year, which saw the transfer completed, he writes: "How thankful we should be to God for His mercies in this, our field of work, and for its possibilities; to me, day by day, it grows more attractive and compensating. The future, God willing, will be full of higher consecration."

From his letters of this time, come these paragraph also:

"I have just had talks with E. . ., who is full of appreciative words about everything, and reports that the boys are happy and contented to an unusual degree among happy school boys, and with H. . . . who, poor boy, is so far from my heart's desire just now. How I have loved that boy; and how he has . . . but enough! There is One who has given His love to H. . ., with greater, purer outflow, and Him have I so often grieved! I have

asked H. . . . to deal honestly with himself, and come to me as soon as he will, and tell me his real desire and purpose."

"April 14, 1886.

"H. . . . has just offered me one of his new pictures, inscribed, 'Yours *most gratefully*.' The underscoring is his. If he should be confirmed in Christian character, he would be a magnificent fellow. How my heart goes out to him!"

"May the blessed Master prepare our souls for larger blessings! How we need Him momently! His is the only strength that can prevail, and yet we try so often to fight by ourselves."

These years in the eighties were full for him of happiness and growth. His marriage had made an atmosphere in which everything that was best in him expanded.

He had then, as indeed he kept always, the extraordinary capacity for light-heartedness and exuberant humor which marked his life at Lafayette. From the pressure of the most exacting work he could turn with a sudden rebound of spirits to some quick jest or boisterous playfulness. Once when he was in his study at commencement time when the strain of the year was at its climax, his bellboy came in with a card-tray bearing the card of a gentleman who was waiting to see him downstairs. He leaped from his chair with a mock ferocity,

deftly kicked the card-tray out of the astonished boy's hand up against the ceiling, stooped and picked up the card, and then—with the boy left grinning behind him—swept down the stairs to meet his visitor.

His music gave him boundless delight. In later years he had less and less chance to enjoy it, but at this time when the school was small he reveled in it. He liked to gather the boys round him in the evenings and sing, with "Mrs. John"—who loved music as much as he did—as the accompanist. He would play games with them, too, and enter into whatever hearty nonsense might be afoot. From one of these games has survived the following jingle, which makes up in spirit what it lacks in rhyme. The rules were that each person in the game should write down on a slip of paper a question; the next person in the circle wrote down under the question a noun; then the third person had to write a poem on the combined subjects.

Here is John Meigs' subject and his response:

"How Can I Leave Thee?"

Cats

"I've gnashed my teeth in agony,
I've torn my hair in passion,
I've thrown my wig, my boots, my hat,
I've spoiled my beauty lashin'

Around the window frosty nights
Meand'ring thro' the halls
A-listening for the demons black
Their dev'lish caterwauls—
And as they scramble on the fence
Up postern gate and wall
Their tails distended, eyes aflame
Their heath'nish yells appall,
I ask my quivering soul, oh, how
If I must leave at all,
Could I my conscience lull to sleep
While cats thus show their gall—
And how I'd leave thee would be thus,
No fur, no ribs, no liver
No mouth, no nose with doleful woes
No rest save depths of river—
I'd pocket all the cor'ner's fees
I'd do a fancy stroke
Of murderous mauling, bloody gouge
Till all your bones were broke."

When his children were born, a whole new realm of happiness began for him. Edith, the eldest, was born in 1883. The following year his son was born. The name he chose for him was a recognition of the influence which had come into his life through the little boy who had loved him, and whom he had loved when he was at Lafayette—the little invalid of whom the story was told in an earlier chapter. When that child died, John Meigs had had in his visits to the Raymonds his first great impression of the kind of radiant Christian faith which turns

sorrow into triumph. He never lost the effect of that, nor ever lost his love for the little child. So he named his own son Dwight Raymond.

Three other daughters came to the family—Margaret, in 1888, Marion, in 1891, and Helen, the youngest, in 1893. In his companionship with them, all that was tender and beautiful in Meigs' nature expanded to the full. He played and romped with them, and entered into all their childish pleasures and excitements—as witness these two letters written to a friend who had sent the children something that threw them into exuberant delight:

"Your letter and telegram announcing your great beneficence arrived in good time before the goats!

"You can imagine the state of exhilaration in which the children managed to exist until the goats reached The Hill. Then their joy knew no bounds, and meals have been a superfluity and a rude interruption to the otherwise unbroken course of their joy in watching the animals and ministering to their dainty palates. They are certainly beautiful, and when the harness, of which you speak, arrives, I shall be able to provide for the children great happiness by supplying a suitable cart, which will give a final touch to their bliss. . . ."

"I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your esteemed favor of the 24th inst., relative to the

harness for the goats. I wonder that you ever found time to even send the goats, for I appreciate, I think, the volume and the multiplicity of the demands upon your time and thought.

"Your suggestion as to the brushing and combing of the goats I note with thanks. A man will attend to this, and I need hardly assure you, that this care is, in a sense, unnecessary so far as convincing us that we have the handsomest pair of goats going is concerned. They are beautiful, even now, and I anticipate great pleasure in the children's happiness during the summer."

In the summer of 1887, he took three Hill boys with him to England, for four weeks' vacation; and thus writes home:

"July 17, 1887.

"This morning we heard Farrar preach a thoroughly characteristic sermon—just such an one as I wanted to hear from him if I were to be denied a second. The text, Psalm cxiii: 3, offered him a magnificent theme for a plea for charity and broad Christian living. His language was as superb as his treatment of the subject on Christ's lines. I was filled almost to the point of sobbing again and again,—and all the accessories of the occasion served to burn it into my soul. The old church, St. Margaret's, the Parliamentary church, has had a new lease of life under his rectorship, and throngs of people struggle for places to hear the wonderful preacher. I had one of the choice seats in the whole edifice, near enough

to the reading desk and pulpit to catch every word with comfort."

"July 23, 1887.

"On Thursday we went out to Windsor and Eton, enjoying our great privilege of going through Eton under N. L. . . .'s guidance. His father had written him of our coming, and he met us at the White Hart, where we lunched, and conducted us through Windsor, so far as it was accessible to the public, and all through Eton's grounds and buildings. The boys were hard at work in every quarter with cricket, and just before we left, word came that Eton had beaten all the schools of England in the annual rifle match at Wimbledon. At half-past four, we returned to N. . . .'s room, which is, I should say, five feet wide and ten or eleven long, with cupboard inserted in wall, from which he took out various packages, depositing their contents upon the table, upon which a servant had placed a tea pot and cups and sugar, with bread cut thin and spread with butter, ripe raspberries in their little baskets, ginger snaps, vanilla cakes, and a jug of 'Surrey Cream,' the richest and most delectable concoction for tea I ever tasted. We thus took 'tea' together in true Eton style, and I actually enjoyed the tea. Lots of little incidents filled up this afternoon, and I was more interested in this visit than in any event of our journey. We came straight from Eton to Southampton.

"Yesterday we spent on the Isle of Wight, a paradise with its few earthly taints. We

were most delighted with Carisbrooke Castle, where Charles I of England was confined, and where his daughter, Elizabeth, died in prison. The view from this elevation is exquisite. We enjoyed Ventnor's beauties, and should easily choose it for a stopping-place in preference to all others. At Newport we witnessed the presentation by the Mayor of the town of an address (Jubilee) to the Queen. We had a commanding view of Her Majesty, Princess Beatrice, Prince Henry of Battenberg, Grand Duke of Hesse and his two daughters. The town was decorated elaborately, and the enthusiasm of the Burghers was great. The Queen was gracious, smiling and cordial in her manner."

"Oban, August 7, 1887.

"Yesterday morning we started for the little islands of Iona, where St. Columba consecrated the very earth by his life of Christ-likeness, and drew the blood-thirsty and blood-imbued chieftains and kings of isle and mainland to desire burial in the soil he trod, and Staffa, where Fingal's Cave astounds one by the wonders of its formation, and its varied display of the handiwork of God.

"To-day the thermometer is about 50 degrees, while I suppose with you at home it is nearly ninety; and yet, as for me, heat has no terrors at home,—blessed spot!

"We attended service this morning at the Congregational church, and heard from Mr. MacGregor, of London, a powerful and beautiful sermon on the text, 'For Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness!' 'Pre-

ventest' in the sense of 'providest' or 'anticipatest for.' The preacher illustrated with rare beauty and power the truth of the text in nature, in Christ, in Providence; and how touchingly he told, here, the story of the prodigal son, and how tenderly he explained Christ's preparing a place for us, just as the wife or mother, for child or husband, is unwilling to allow other or menial hands to prepare for the returning one after long absence. After service, we partook of the Lord's Supper, so simply, but sweetly, composing all unrest, and breathing new peace and hope in my soul."

"London, August 12, 1887.

"Since writing you from Oban, we have had by far the pleasantest week of our journeyings. Owing to the severe storm which would last, according to the Scotch authorities on the matter, from three to four days, we abandoned our trip over the Caledonian Canal to Inverness, and came down to Glasgow. The Cathedral of Glasgow has, unquestionably, the finest collection of stained-glass work in the kingdom, and I have never seen such magnificent effects, nor deemed them possible, as in Christ's ascension. It was in the crypt here —which, strangely enough, contains the finest glass windows—that, according to Scott, Rob Roy gave the warning to Osbaldistone, as recounted in Rob Roy. That night we came down to Carlisle, where Mary Queen of Scots was first imprisoned, visiting, early the next day, the Cathedral, and then advancing to the English lake region, by way of Penrith and Keswick. We took a carriage for a day driv-

ing to Greta Hall (Southey's residence) to the Falls of Lodore . . . and along Derwentwater; then by way of Grasmere, where Wordsworth is buried, to Rydal, where he lived, though his house is scrupulously closed to visitors by the present owner, and on to Ambleside and Windermere, from which point we made our approach to Manchester. . . .

"We came on to Rugby that night, and by management I got access to the chapel, where Arnold preached and lies buried before the chancel—simply 'Thomas Arnold' graven on a marble slab, but oh! the indelible impression he has graven on the lives of so many priceless souls that shall go on speaking through other souls when all trace of the name is effaced! It was a solemn hour to me, and how I wished to be alone there at that shrine but for a little time! It was not so to be, and my prayer for the help and spirit of Arnold's Christ was no less sincere and burning because of the boys' presence. . . .

"At Oxford, I bought Bazeley's life, which you will enjoy deeply. His evangelistic work was wonderful, and the Scotch church at Oxford is his own gift to his people. He died in '83 I believe, but his is a hallowed name on the lips of all who knew him or his work. . . .

"We have visited the wonderful Kensington museums, the Blue Coat and Charterhouse schools—in the latter of which you will remember Thackeray, who was educated there, located Colonel Newcome in his last days—the pathetic ending of which is one of Thackeray's finest passages. Thence we went down the Thames, by boat, to Greenwich,

where after visiting the hospital and observatory we had one of the famous 'Ship Tavern' dinners."

"Sunday evening, August 14, 1887.

"I rose early this A. M., and after breakfast we attended service at Westminster Abbey. I pray that the great throng there felt more of the spiritual power of the sermon and service than I did. The entire service, prayers, everything except the scripture lessons, was intoned, and the music, though artistically beautiful and moving, was powerless to stir one's thoughts one half so much as silence in that grand sanctuary might. The sermon, on the text, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,' was composed largely of rather striking, but crudely correlated anecdotes, which distracted rather than fixed one's thoughts on the magnificent theme. The more I see and hear of this mighty church 'establishment'—fixed in the state, rather than in the heart, of its very dignitaries and apostles—the more convinced am I of its wide and almost hopeless departure from Christ's ideal organization which must have been simplicity itself and directness in its quintessence.

"Think of it—at Rugby and Stratford-on-Avon we heard and saw the Salvation Army in its aggressive work, and here to-night, we heard choirs of Christian singers arresting the attention of passers-by, by gathering in front of their respective churches, and with organ accompaniment, tell the story of Christ. Here are the two extremes of so-called Christian worship. How wide the interval, God knows

and judges. Dear Master, help us to live Thy praise and speak it too! . . .

"To-night we have been writing, all save R. . . ., who retired early. He is a singular boy, and one is at a loss where to place him. We are all just so—bundles of paradoxes—God help us all!"

At this point it is interesting to add also some of the impressions reflected in the letters written home from Europe during another trip a few years later:

"Amsterdam.

"In the midst of this wonderful Dutch people I have groaned for you. Your soul would be filled by the sights on every hand, and their patience under stupendous natural disadvantage would wrest admiration from your responsive spirit. I am amazed at the courtesy, the kindliness, of all classes and conditions of men—and children, too. We should be astounded by such politeness in America, and they here must be aghast at our manners sometimes. I have noticed the children and the country children especially, and they seem to me the simplest, happiest lot of youngsters I have ever seen. It has been a positive delight to watch them at their play or at their domestic tasks. Even you would pronounce Holland the cleanest country in the world, and while they have a superabundance of water at their doors, literally, for many men can step out of their front doors into the canal, if they so choose—there is a clean, wholesome, constitu-

tional characteristic that one fails utterly to see in Venice, where the streets are all canals. I am prouder than ever before of the infusion of Dutch blood in my veins, be it ever so slight. (Through his father's grandmother, Jemina Van Boskerk, of Albany). I shall be really happy only when I have spent days, not to say weeks, in this wonderful garden spot. The expanse of country is like an animated painting. I have been to Delft and gotten a few trifles of the ware for tokens. I have visited Rotterdam, The Hague, the capital, which is marvelously attractive, and Scheveningen, and Amsterdam, the commercial capital. So far, I have had but one impression of the Dutch people, and I have already uttered it."

"Copenhagen, July 22.

"I surely am seeing much that is new and moving without undertaking prodigies in the way of miles of canvas, traversed by my eye, while my brain is whirling in hopeless confusion. I am systematically avoiding art galleries, though I have deep pleasure in visiting the Thorwaldsen Museum, which is devoted to the great master's wonderful work exclusively. I have driven or ridden much, have visited the famous Deer Park in the country near by, and seen some of the royal family at, or near their summer residence, *en famille*. This is to me, next to Holland, the most engaging region I have seen.

"From Amsterdam via Hamburg, I came to Kiel, where I took the Danish mail steamer, a government boat, for Korsor, in Denmark, whence I came by rail to Copenhagen. . . .

But a thousandfold more interesting and unexpected was my meeting at Hamburg, and keeping up the association as far as Copenhagen, with General Booth, of the Salvation Army, en route to Stockholm for a three days' visit and campaign. I had much conversation with him, and he was as simple and affable and cordial as a child. He looks better and younger than I had anticipated, and bears his honors meekly. He is coming to America in the autumn, and will be in Philadelphia, so that we may see and hear him there. I inclose you his signature on one of his cards. You will prize it, I am sure.

"The open air life of the people here delights me, their countenances are ruddy, fresh and wholesome, and their eyes clear and frank. The children are peculiarly winsome and approachable."

"July 23.

"Was it not singular, my meeting General Booth at Hamburg? I was already in the train and saw him approaching, recognized him from his pictures, and taking off my hat addressed him. He came up to me and greeted me most cordially, and thereafter we were quite chummy. The King of Sweden has made unprecedented concession in the matter of public meetings in the great square in Stockholm, and as you may recall, the Crown Prince was a delegate at the Y. M. C. A. Jubilee in London recently. In this fact may be found the explanation for the surprising privilege granted the Salvation Army. One of the General's attendants was a Swede, who, ten years

ago, I believe, turned from his studies in the University of Upsala, Sweden, to engage in this work. He acts as an interpreter on this expedition, having devised a system of interpretation that the General says is practically almost as effective as direct speech."

"Christiania, Norway, July 24.

"The ride to Helsingor, where Shakespeare locates one of the great scenes in Hamlet, was interesting. At this point, the train crosses by a ferry from Denmark to Sweden, through which the journey was most uninteresting and commonplace until one o'clock this A. M. On entering Norway, we were all examined as to our antecedents and destination by a health officer, who was on the scent for cholera. As I had none about me, I passed muster, though I see no reason why a man could not lie like a son of Belial and frustrate utterly the government's scrupulous care. . . . The sleeping cars, built on the ever-wakeful principle, are a study. One is expected to stretch out at length on the cushions of this compartment, with which you are familiar, and with a microscopically discernible pillow, and a blanket that won't stand the microscope, luxuriate in modern appliances for comfort. If I had to travel at night here, I should organize a "pullman strike" on original lines. . . . I just met Ibsen on the street and may meet him personally this P. M., as I have been offered an introduction. He is so like his pictures and caricatures that I recognized him instantly, though I had no idea he lived here. Booth and Ibsen within four days of each other! What a

contrast, and yet they are working out, each in his own way, their theory of the truth for the salvation of society. What vessels the Almighty does use for His purposes—and what weak ones—I realize better day by day. . . .

. . . . . .

"The kind of terror that 'walketh at noonday' and that sign U. S. A. after their names on the hotel registers, make one's hair stand on end. I have had to listen to the conversation of two of them. One of them had seen nothing at Copenhagen but Tivoli, a kind of Coney Island affair, and the other rather insisted that the so-called Viking ship at Chicago was an original.

"The first glimpses I get here of Norway are reassuring, and doubly so, for to-morrow I begin to travel westward."

Back to The Hill after the first journey, Meigs came in the fall of 1887 for three more years of steady growth in the school. But at the end of the third school year, in July, 1890, there came another fire, more sweeping, more ruinous than the fire of 1884. Destroying, as it did, the entire equipment of the school, and recompensed, as it turned out, by inadequate insurance, the disaster seemed at first so complete as to be almost crushing. But Meigs looked the difficulties in the face unflinchingly, drew a grateful breath that they were not worse, and then set himself, with indomitable hopefulness, to shape out of the ashes of the

old school his vision for the new. His letters tell the vivid story of the way in which he turned his trial into blessing. He was away from the school when the fire occurred, and so was Mrs. Meigs. Hurrying back to Pottstown, he writes her from on board the train:

"Surely God has called us to a most unusual experience of His dealings, mysterious beyond words while we look upon the things that are seen, but in and through it all, His great mercy ever shines. If this latest calamity had befallen our home by night, how awful might have been the consequences! Who can say what agony might have been added to our already great loss? It is at best a great blow to us, only beginning to emerge from the shadow of great burdens borne so many years, but we can look up and say, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' Six years ago we found cause to thank Him for the loss that seemed at first to be irreparable; who knows but that we shall be happier and more useful for, and because of this affliction? Such is the spirit in which we shall meet this shock. With the presence of Him 'who giveth liberally,' we can nothing lack."

Then from Pottstown he wrote again:

"July 4, 1890.

"H. . . . came to Harrisburg to meet me this morning. By the time we reached Pottstown I was thoroughly posted on everything

but the origin of the fire. No one knows, though it was first detected in the third story near the elevator. The Fire Company, being telephoned for, responded soon, but found the water supply deficient. They fought heroically, and saved the annex and gymnasium, though the schoolroom fell easy prey to the fire, because of its yellow pine ceiling and lining. It is practically—for insurance recovery—a total loss, the annex alone having its walls intact, and even its interior is defiled and disfigured by the gum-like deposit and smoke coming from the schoolroom. The busts, which were not destroyed, are ebonized now. The iron girders in the dining-room appear intact, and have had much to do in saving the walls of the East Wing. The basement is a horrible marsh, water and mud from above having deluged it. The floors in the old stone part, on the first story are not burned through; above all is gone, far worse, I think, than in '84. As a whole, the sweep of destruction was more terrible than in '84, but the outer walls are in promising condition, except in the southeast corner. Our fireplace and chimney again rears its head aloft, the hearthstone and back and jams unmoved by the general wreck. . . . By Monday we ought to have fifty men at work, cleaning away the débris, and then we purpose to make things hum, though until the insurance people settle I cannot lay a hand to the work. While I was going through the ruins with the builders, a lady and gentleman were announced, who entered their boy amid desolation itself—a striking and cheering to-

ken of faith, surely. It is wonderful how little damage was done to the grounds about the house.

"I have lots of telegrams offering service; everybody has been kindness itself. It is touching to discover the sentiments of the people. This will be a blessing, though to-day it is a great burden. I am delighted to be occupied with plans for a perfect building from cellar to roof. This disaster is already being blessed to our future I know, and before the new year comes we shall say it was a blessing undisguised! It is a positive delight to be able to plan how to carry out every idea that I have felt must be dismissed for years, if not forever. . . . I feel more infused with courage now than ever before, and with God's help and counsel we shall be able to do far more for our boys than ever before. . . . What a glorious rest I had with the loved ones at E. . . .! It gives me strength and spirit for the big pull ahead! Have been up nearly all night making an inventory for use of insurance men, and to-day comes the encounter. God help us! The appraisers of the building will go ahead while we are overhauling the furniture—a sickening business; but it will all come out right; of this be assured.

"I telegraphed S. . . . Grand opportunity to improve on the past. Am hopeful and as happy as it is decent to be." [Speaking of his disappointment concerning the result of the amount of insurance allowed.]

"Well, we have better than earthly riches, and it is still within our power to make our

beloved home sweeter still, and means amply to do this, though I shall have less of a surplus than I anticipated. . . .

"Yesterday was a big day in achievement, and I am passing from the realm of hope to that of expectation that we shall be ready for our boys at the regular date."

He had the grounds strung with arc lights, and a double force of workmen labored on the walls of the new buildings day and night; while he himself was among them continually, urging, pushing, inspiring foremen and men to finish the whole construction in season for him to make good his promise that the school would open at the usual time in the fall.

In spite of multiplied difficulties, it did open only a very little after the hoped-for day; and a vivid glimpse of John Meigs himself may be caught through the words of one of the masters, Mr. Alfred G. Rolfe, who began his long term of service at the school in that memorable year.

"I shall never forget," he wrote, "the opening night. The schoolroom was in an unfinished state, and workmen were still busy when Professor took his place to conduct evening prayers. There was no organ, and as Professor started the first hymn, 'Holy, holy, holy,' I said to myself,—'he can never carry it through; it's too high.' I didn't know

the man. The hymn went triumphantly through to its finish, Professor's powerful voice dominating all. Then followed a short passage of scripture, and then the prayer, strong, helpful, inspiring. Then Professor called up boy after boy, addressing them all, new and old, by their first names, and settling each case in a few crisp, decisive words. I had been teaching several years, but I had never seen in school or college such an example of power. Professor was master then as always,—strong, calm and self-controlled."

Years afterwards—in the year, in fact, of his death—there came to John Meigs a little note from a gentleman in England. It said: "I was talking to a man on the 'phone just now, and in the course of sundry moralizings I had occasion to say to him, 'Well, as an American whom I once met for an hour or two in a train in Switzerland remarked to me, "Obstacles are the glory of life."' So you see you are not forgotten." To many other persons who had thus met him, even for a very little while, John Meigs was a man not easily forgotten; and the reason was that those who had come in contact with his spirit felt in him, not as a phrase, but as a fact, that strength which out of obstacles had won its glory.

CHAPTER VI

IDEALS FOR THE SCHOOL

Thring of Uppingham as Exemplar of John Meigs' Ideals—The Educational Value of Beautiful Things—The Mother in the School—The Influence of the Masters—Training the Older Boys for Leadership—John Meigs' Loyalty to Boys Who Seemed to Fail—His Hopefulness, and "Humanness"—Boys Whom He Befriended—The Exile from Japan—The Power of His Prayers.

WITH the rebuilding of the school after the fire of 1890, there began another decade of progress and expansion. The buildings which had been burned were replaced by larger and better ones. The walls of the old stone family mansion still stood firm after the flames had swept the interior, and within these much-tried walls the headmaster's house was, for the second time, restored. Back of it, and extending along the crest of the hill, ran a three-story building of brown brick, afterwards overgrown with vines, in which on the first floor was the big dining-room, and on the second and third floors, rooms for the younger boys. At right angles from the end of this building, ran another of the same general appearance, with the gymnasium on the first floor, and the

great schoolroom where the boys studied on the second. Opposite the headmaster's house and the dining-room, and forming with that first building and the schoolroom the third side of an open quadrangle, was built some years later what was called then the "Sixth Form Wing." From a brick cloistered arcade on the first floor opened the large general reading-room, where the papers and magazines and a library of books for the boys were kept, and several recitation rooms; more recitation rooms, and the physical and chemical laboratories were in the basement—a basement which, on account of the steep slope of the land, was almost wholly above ground on the side away from the quadrangle. The rooms of the Sixth Form boys were on the second floor, and those of the Fifth Formers on the third, and in a little turret on the fourth floor that finished the end of the building. On the other side of the schoolroom, and forming a prolongation in that direction of the Sixth Form Wing, was a smaller building with rooms for the boys; and in the "Cottage,"—a building about fifty yards away which had been built originally by Dr. Matthew Meigs for his own residence, then sold and afterwards repurchased for the school—lived some twenty-five or thirty remaining boys. In the cottage, and in all the

halls of the main buildings, were the residence rooms of the masters, all of whom lived among the boys, with the exception of a few married men who had houses just outside the borders of the school grounds.

To a singular degree the school, in its shaping and reshaping, expressed the ideals and convictions of the man who was at its head. Vitally significant were those words of John Meigs', already quoted: "I am glad I am not hampered and can carry out my own ideas and ideals." What he meant, of course, was his freedom from dictation by others who might not have seen the school's opportunities, nor have possessed the venturesome imagination which would have sanctioned daring plans. In the formative years of the school there was no board of trustees to which he was subordinate. The upbuilding of the school was his task, his responsibility and his chance. Obstacles there were, of course, and exceeding difficulties; but at least, unshackled by any interferences, he could measure against them his full strength. The financial problem after the second fire was a grave one, even as it had been at the time of the school's beginning. Meigs had to trust to his own energies and his powers to convince men with financial resources of the soundness of his plans, if he should ever hope to equal what

a school with a large endowment might achieve. Much money was needed to build the new buildings, and to make possible the constant enlargement of the grounds and the beautifying of the whole school plant which Meigs' unresting imagination conceived. It was necessary that he should borrow sums so large that a timid man would have flinched from the risk of them, and have chosen instead to be content with narrower and less eager ideals of what the school might come to be. But it was characteristic of John Meigs that, as he projected greatly, so he flung action forward on the heels of thought. He knew what he wanted to do with The Hill, and he believed in his plans so thoroughly that he was able to make others believe in them too. "The name of John Meigs was collateral enough for me," said the president of a Pottstown bank who had loaned him large sums of money. Into the school, year after year, and into the repayment of the money which had been loaned to enlarge it, went the surplus that had been left from the previous session. So its borders grew, and the compass of its walls widened. The number of boys who could be taken increased to one hundred in 1890, and to two hundred and twenty-five in 1900. On the shoulders of the man who carried his great responsibility

the burden of debt was a heavy load, which to the end of his life was never lifted; but he bore it gladly for the sake of his knowledge that little by little he was building his ideals into reality.

Often we may learn much as to a man's purpose by understanding his admirations. In the figures whom he looked up to, we may find the interpretation of many of his own conceptions of nobility and success. For John Meigs there were two men who stood as exemplars of much that he believed the head of a great school ought to be. One was Thomas Arnold, of Rugby; the other was Edward Thring, of Uppingham.

Of these two, it was to Thring, particularly, that Meigs looked with a peculiar glow of sympathetic regard. In many curious parallels—set off, too, by sharp contrasts not the less significant—Thring's problems and deep trials were like those which Meigs knew as his own, and with Thring's ambitions and ideals he felt an intuitive kinship. In 1853, the year after John Meigs was born, Thring became headmaster of Uppingham, one of the older schools of England, founded in its little Midland town by Robert Johnson, Archdeacon of Leicester, in 1584. Old as it was, the school was still comparatively insignificant in equipment, numbers and standing. When

Thring came to it, it had only twenty-five boys and two assistant masters, an antiquated master's house and a sixteenth century schoolroom. The endowment was so meager as to give little or no support for hopeful planning, and Thring had very small means of his own. Worst of all, he was hampered—as John Meigs rejoiced that he never was—by a board which governed the trust funds of the foundation, and from the majority of this board, men who were narrow-visioned, timid and stubborn, Thring received in the years of his heaviest struggling not help, but wearying hindrance. Yet single-handed he set himself to the task of taking the obscure and ill-furnished school and lifting it to commanding rank. From the beginning, he had certain clear ideals to which he clung with an intensity of conviction which was never shaken, even when it seemed sometimes as though his loyalty to them might cost the very existence of the school itself. He felt that the schools of England, and the system which they had made familiar, were vitally deficient in two respects: in the first place, that their teaching was arranged for the benefit of the brilliant boys, while the classes were so large and the instructors so few that the average boys were left to shift indifferently for themselves; and that, in the second

place, picturesque as many of the schools were, yet in the matter of actual adaptability to the good of the boys, both physical and moral, they were often crude and sometimes almost dangerous. The standards which Thring lifted up required courage and determination of the highest sort to maintain. His protest against conditions with which he believed England too complacently to have been satisfied roused the hostility of the friends of the great schools which by implication he criticized; and the application of his ideals to Uppingham itself meant an expenditure upon teaching force and upon buildings so out of proportion to the parallel expenditures in other schools, and so far outstripping the resources of the small endowment, that the burden of debt at times almost crushed Thring's spirit. He poured into the school all the money he himself had; he found now and then a man whom his own enthusiasm inspired to share his ideals and his sacrifices, and these men came to be masters at Uppingham under him, to help build up the school which Thring had dreamed.

When success seemed at last to have been won, there came in 1876—the year in which John Meigs went to The Hill—a disaster which all but annihilated the school. Typhoid fever had broken out in the fall term

previous, and there had been great uneasiness among the parents, and such real danger to the boys that Thring closed the school in November until after Christmas. He did his utmost, meanwhile, to probe the cause of the fever to the bottom, and was convinced that the drains of the town of Uppingham were to blame. In the school itself he did everything which the severest experts could suggest in the way of precaution, but the jealous stubbornness of petty officials blocked his efforts at a drastic reformation of conditions in the town; and he faced the opening of the winter term of 1876 with an apprehensive heart. It was not long before the fever broke out among the boys again, this time more virulent and deadly than before. There was nothing left but to break up the school a second time and send the boys home till none knew when. "One thing I feel sure of," Thring wrote in anguish of spirit, "that this is the beginning of the end." Yet in this darkest hour, when his heart and hope were almost gone, Thring's courage, nevertheless, girded itself up again for the one herculean venture that could save the school. He determined to transplant it bodily. When the boys had reached their homes, and the news had come that the parents of some of them were already casting about for other schools, Thring sent a letter

to them all, saying that Uppingham would reopen after Easter in a new location as yet to be arranged. Then began what he called in grimmest truth, "a fierce race for life." A place fit for the school had first to be *found,* then secured, and then the plans made to establish the school there as an actual working reality; and every day's difference in progress or delay was of desperate importance.

Thring succeeded. On March 27th, the school reopened in a building that had been a hotel, on the sea-coast of Wales, at Borth. Until Easter, 1877, or a full year, the school remained in Wales, and then, when the town of Uppingham, chastened by much suffering, had corrected the conditions which the stubborn stupidity of its officials caused, the school moved back to its old home. Though the stay at Borth itself had been made beautifully memorable by the glory of the sea-coast, and the cordiality of the people, the year, of course, had been marked by terrible anxieties and great financial burdens for Thring and his assistant masters through the double transfer. When the school was established at Uppingham again, there were those among the trustees and the masters who wanted to increase the size of the school, in order that the masters' losses might be made up by increased revenues from the boarding pupils

in their several houses. But even under the pressure of the new and almost crushing difficulties, Thring's insistence upon his ideals never flinched. It had been from the beginning his conviction that for the proper training of all the boys under the guidance of one spirit in the system of Uppingham, it was essential that the school should not exceed three hundred and thirty or three hundred and forty boys. That point it had reached; and Thring absolutely refused to allow that number to be passed, no matter what conceivable emergency should seem to furnish an argument for a modification in his principle. He would not, he said, increase the school's prosperity and " ruin its life." In this matter, as in others, the masters under him rallied finally to his side. Uppingham continued according to the ideals which Thring had shaped for it from the first; and before his gallant life came to its end, in 1887, there were many in England who held him to be the strongest and most constructive force in the life of the great schools of the nation.

The story of what Thring was doing and had done in Uppingham brought its brave message to John Meigs in his often similar task across the seas. He shared to the uttermost Thring's fundamental belief that a school, in the first place, should be made not

the harsh arena from which the exceptional boy might come out victorious, but in which the average boy should be submerged; but that it should be molded instead by that spirit of the true home in which the least endowed is given by love an equal chance to develop the utmost of which he is capable. And, in the second place, he believed, as Thring did, that for a school to attain this ideal meant an infinitely patient and thorough, and also a very costly, planning of its buildings, its surroundings, its system of teaching and its life.

It was because of this that Meigs in the building of the school was continually reaching out for the best that could be constructed for the welfare of the boys. It was because of this, too, that he never approved of great dormitories in which considerable numbers of boys slept within the same walls, but provided instead for boys to be alone, or with only one roommate, so that the individuality of different boys might thus be recognized and respected.

In those things also which had to do not with the essential construction, but with the adornment of the school, Meigs believed intuitively in the same principles which Thring worked out at Uppingham. He loved beautiful things himself, and he felt that the silent

ministry of beautiful things about them would have its steady, ennobling effect upon the boys at The Hill. Not only, therefore, did he put upon the walls of the great schoolroom busts and pictures, but he put these also in the many recitation rooms where the boys went for their various classes. In the Greek room, for instance, were representations of the friezes of the Parthenon; in the Latin room, photographs of Rome. And on the walls of all the corridors of the school were other great framed prints and engravings which brought their constant suggestion of the noblest buildings and paintings of the world. Meigs did not happen to write down what was in this thought when he did this, but doubtless his idea was like that which Thring expressed when he said in one of his letters: "I have just got a new forward move. You may remember perhaps the photographs in my classroom and the idea of culture through them. Well, I have got twenty-six magnificent autotypes of ancient art in upper school now, and I mean to turn out by degrees all the mean furniture in the room, and I hope that this will make the low views and meannesses connected with lessons and learning drop off by the mere force of fine surroundings, just as good surroundings have made the whole domestic life of the school

higher, and freed it from tricks and petty savagery." And again he said, "It is hard to escape something of the pig if lodged in a sty. The schoolboy has not escaped and never will till honor to lessons is the first article in the nation's secular creed. Everything that meets the eye ought to be perfect, according to the work and workers, as human skill can make it. Give honor, you will receive honor. I know that boys respond with honor when they and their life-work are honored."

In deeper and more intimate things also than the plans for the visible aspects of the school John Meigs rejoiced in that sense of spiritual comradeship with Thring which one strong man feels with another—though far away and never seen—who is grappling nobly with such problems as he himself must face. Many of the ways in which the work he did resembled Thring's had, of course, in Meigs' case no relationship to Thring as example; through his own thought and by the impulse of his own character he arrived at many of the conclusions which the master of Uppingham also had worked out. But when he did come to know of Thring, and to read what he had written, and what others had written about him, Meigs was swift to acknowledge the inspiration he and all other schoolmasters

might receive from him. Thring's great courage, his costly devotion to his clear ideals, the authority of his rulership because that rulership was built upon a loyalty to something higher than himself, and the intense religious consecration of all his work, made his personality seem peculiarly near and glowing to John Meigs. In his own trials at The Hill, and especially in that most bitter crisis so like the great crisis at Uppingham—the typhoid epidemic of which the story is to come—he turned to Thring's revelation of the travail of his own soul for strength and patience and power.

To return, however, to the matter of the school itself, its principles and its organization, we are not left to comparisons to know what Meigs was thinking. As has been said before, he kept no diary nor book in which he wrote down his meditations; but he made an address once on, "The Ideals of the Home School," the manuscript of which is preserved, and in that he sets forth some of the beliefs which he built into the fabric of The Hill.

The first part of it ran as follows:

"In the ideal home boys are early taught obedience, truthfulness, purity, unselfishness, service, 'self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—these three alone lead life to sovereign power.'

PROFESSOR JOHN MEIGS AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-FOUR

"The ideal home for the growing boy should be in the country, with a first-rate school within easy distance, suitable companions at hand, and parents who can devote a fair amount of time to their children. But most people to-day are dwellers in a city, where opportunities for the physical development of a boy are few, and where the whirl of life is so dizzying, and engagements so preoccupying, that family life is little more than a tradition of happier days.

"And so it comes to pass that boarding-schools confront the parent, as the alternative to the mutilated conditions of existence that environ the boy in his city home. . . .

"There must be change at every step we take, as boys or men; there must be new things to be learnt, new experiences to be bought. But an absolute break there need never be, if love takes the place in our lives it should take; takes such a place that every new fact, every new experience can be referred back to the one place where we learnt the meaning of love in its finest sense—home.

"After all, the life of a boy in a home school of the best sort is not much different from the life of a boy in a home of the best sort. The family is much larger; the love of the father and mother may not be there; but a love high and devoted *is* there.

"There is the mother of the family who brings the spirit of love and refinement into this throng of growing lads, who instinctively understands them and comforts them and fills them with a high sense of the glory and

beauty of womanhood; who tirelessly toils and strives, and prays her great household through the tempestuous period of her high commission; who fulfills even the hope of parents who seem to trust that the love of others for their children will be more unselfish than their own; who becomes, in sooth, the very Madonna of manifold lives.

"There is the definite concentrated influence due to the line taken by the headmaster upon the various points in the education of boys, and handed on by him to the members of his staff, and to whom the boy looks for final judgment.

"There are the masters with whom he freely associates, whose personality is more than books and knowledge and teaching and skill combined—the greatest power in the world;—

"Men who are living epistles read of every boy—the familiar companions of the boys in sports as well as studies—no longer as in the olden time looked upon as moral policemen, but lovers of boys, who in their love are willing to give much of their time to their upbuilding, to sacrifice much of their worldly interest;—

"Men of good scholarship and of fine character who have not failed in other things, nor are trying to make a living while they are preparing to enter the public ministry or the law;—

"Men whose ministry is as sacred and devoted as that upon which the formal hands of consecration have been laid—whole-souled,

red-blooded, glorious men who give themselves and everything they are and have to help develop men for the nation,—

"Such masters there are, and when the young boy meets them on the threshold of his home-school life, he enters an atmosphere of affection and devotion to lofty ideals—the essentials of the Christian life.

"And then, perhaps, best of all in this greater household in which the boys and masters and the family of the headmaster meet at table, at work, at play, at worship, and sleep under the same roof, are the loyal-hearted Upper Form boys who, the elder brothers of the family, act as guides, advisers and heroes for the younger boys to follow and worship.

"As time goes on, the new-boy's relations to these people change. He becomes an older boy himself. The mother and the head of the house are his close friends, with whom he discusses freely his possible services to other boys, becoming thus a fellow worker with the masters to prevent evil, to keep the whole body sound.

"Advantage is taken of the intense admiration which the younger boys have for their elders in the school, and these latter are trained to take responsibility and strong positions against evil and for righteousness, and to go to college committed in their own minds to clean living.

"Teachers who love boys who are bent upon righteousness and boys who will sympathize with the masters in trying to establish

pure and clean and righteous living in the school, are the great powers. With these co-workers, in a question of moral principle a boy is taken in hand and helped to break up a bad habit before it has taken firm hold of him. Discipline becomes different from that of the old-time schools.

"It need not be said that the standards of scholarship in the home school must be of the highest. Where close and confidential relationships beget such intimacies of mind and soul between boys and masters as are the most stimulating forces in life, the heart strengthens the will to firmer purpose and kindles the brain to more ardent employments. . . .

"There is an absence of rigor in restricting, to one grade, the work of each boy. He is individualized, in respect of his mental and temperamental characteristics, and may pursue, for instance, science, history, language and mathematics on different levels, conditioned only by the demands of the university or technical school to which he may later seek admission.

"From such a school the graduates go well-equipped for college, for life. Some may sink, some do; but they know what is right, they have looked into the very heart of a life which is strong and sound and pulsating for others, and they will never be satisfied with material, sordid, irresponsible views of life which the world may try to impress upon them.

"And to such a school the old boys frequently return, too often, perhaps, as to the

real home of their souls—whose standards of service loyally upheld, whose high expectations sacredly cherished and whose loving behests eagerly accepted stimulate the spiritual sons of the great household to conquests worthy of the high devotion that blessed their boyhood and of the yearning solicitude and affection that attend their onward life.

"The school becomes to these a haven of imperishable sympathies and high aspirations. The touch of sorrow and the kindling of a new joy alike send quivering home the saddened or the gladdened son of spirit-birth, for comfort or for chiding or for joy perfected by the sharing of its great gifts with those who may have first laid its foundations in the pure standards of reverent living.

"This relationship neither time nor change can dissolve—and maturer years can only strengthen because into it have entered the eternal things of life and character that rest in the unchangeable God."

As John Meigs described thus his conception of what a school ought to be, he was, as a matter of fact, describing also what he was trying to make true at The Hill. From the beginning, he had sought to create in the school such an atmosphere and influence as should bring to the boys what a home at its best might give.

When he spoke of "the mother of the family who prays her great household through

the tempestuous period of her high commission and who becomes, in sooth, the very Madonna of manifold lives," he was thinking of one whom he might not name, but of whose likeness to that ideal his own heart—and the hearts of scores of boys at The Hill—well knew. That which, joined to the influence of John Meigs himself, more than any other thing set the tone and created the spirit of The Hill was the touch of Mrs. Meigs upon the boys. In the lovely "sky-parlor," up in the high tower of the old stone building of the headmaster's house, with its wide windows looking out over the tranquil trees, many a boy in his talks with her has caught the gleam of new meanings for his life, and gone down to the school again with the power of finer purpose in his soul.

Next in importance to the headmaster and his wife in influence upon the boys were, of course, the other masters. Meigs realized well that for the effective transmission of his ideals to the great body of the boys, it was imperative that he should gather about him a group of men who were both ready and able to share his convictions as to what the school ought to be and to interpret those convictions in daily work. He was lavish in his efforts, therefore, to get and keep the best men he could find. He made his scale of salaries

large—far larger, for instance, than the scale for similar work in the colleges. He required obedience to the laws and standards of The Hill; but, as he never flinched from giving necessary criticism and correction, so also he was generous in his recognition of work well done. He valued scholarship and thorough teaching; but he valued the kind of rounded manhood which boys would look up to even more.

He wrote in a letter to a friend at one of the universities who had suggested a man for a position at The Hill:

"Let me hear from you with reference to the matter, and if you have in mind another man—for I shall make two or three changes—I shall be pleased to hear of him. You know the kind I am wanting here. First of all, I say unhesitatingly they must be Christian gentlemen. Brilliant scholarship is a good thing, but not so good a thing as an earnest nature supplemented by the discipline of conscientious work during four years, without perhaps the dazzling record for exact knowledge that some men easily attain; and I am convinced that it is utter folly for me to bring in any new men here who are not earnest Christian men primarily. Secondly: they should, of course, have distinct ability in one line or another, and capacity for good clean work, along with a healthful interest in the many-sided life of school boys."

To one of the earlier graduates of the school who was thinking of coming back to The Hill as a master he wrote:

"There is undoubtedly a wide field in the teaching profession, and a whole-hearted man of character and energy will have quick recognition. The heads, and, in a number of cases, assistants in the various departments, are permanently attached to the school, and it is my hope that as the years go on changes will become still more infrequent. I want the men to feel that they are really engaged here in their life-work, and that the good work they are doing secures to them an indefinite tenure of their places, so far as their own comfort and happiness may warrant their continuance here. . . . Teaching is a great work and a very laborious life, and yet there is nothing in it to deter a man from devoting himself unreservedly to such a career as implies so distinct a service to humankind. Personally, I enjoy the life and work more and more."

The man to whom this letter was written, Mr. Arthur Judson, did come to The Hill to become one of John Meigs' close associates; and after his death Mr. Judson wrote of him:

"As a headmaster his executive capacity was one of the things that most impressed me. Although he was not a good speaker and found it hard to make a matter of policy clear

to his assembled masters without the use of unnecessary words, he continually astonished us by the quickness with which he grasped the salient facts of any proposition laid before him and saw whether it were practical or the reverse. It was a matter of common knowledge that if a man had something to say to Professor in the study, he would do well to have every aspect of it perfectly clear in his mind before he entered. Otherwise, he might be suddenly interrupted, and hear the entire plan presented, argued and condemned by Professor, who would have caught the drift of it from the first two or three sentences, and instantly have seen the whole thing clear in every detail.

"Professor had a very high conception of the ideal Hill schoolmaster, and ardently desired that every man on the force should see it as he did. He tried from time to time to express his ideas on this subject in faculty meetings, but I think seldom did himself justice. I used to wonder why it was so hard for him, remembering as I did his marvelous ability as a teacher; and I believe the solution is to be found in the sensitiveness of his feeling about the school. The Hill and its welfare were so intimately a part of himself that he hesitated to speak out exactly what he felt. But when things had gone well—when the men had met one of the trying times of examinations, closing days or what not, or when some definite, concrete thing had gone wrong—then he was able to speak directly and with eloquence. He was as ready with

praise as with blame, but he needed the inspiration of an accomplished fact.

"And who was quicker than he to sympathize with real trouble, to give sound advice when he thought it was needed, to settle financial troubles with an unexpected check, and pass it off as if it were a reward for service performed, to praise work well done?

"Just one thing more. If there is one thing in particular that I personally owe to him, it is the ability to hang on when things are discouraging, and just to work, and work, and keep on working. That tenacity may help to save some of us inferior mortals, even though it never leads to the great things to which those who are not great oft aspire."

Of the same kind was the impression he made upon another of the masters, Mr. Michael F. Sweeney, of whose part in the life of the school more is to be said presently. Said he:

"John Meigs had the unusual but most valuable gift in a headmaster of arousing enthusiasm in those with whom he came in contact. If all his influences could be generalized and concentrated into one idea, I should say that the one big influence he gave, quickened or vitalized in me was, that in whatever activity I undertook I should give that activity all my power.

"By his own example he showed me that no money, time, thought or energy should

be spared in order to equip oneself, particularly in one's main line of work. He aroused my enthusiam to the point of my giving for the first eight years of my life at The Hill, over two-thirds of my summer vacation to study, attending summer school, etc., and often suggested to pay any unusual expense that might be necessary to secure such training.

"His zeal and fire were contagious. By his own example he lit any smouldering fires that were lying dormant in a man's nature. The effect of his personality was like the ignition of an electric spark—one could scarcely keep from 'lighting up.' It was by his continual stimulation of these deeper forces in his men that he fed and kept alive the interest of most of his teachers in their chosen line of work. He had tremendous will-power, and was essentially a man of action. He made one feel that thinking and feeling were not life until put into action; that an idea, no matter how noble, was wasted unless it was expressed."

He delivered on one occasion an address at Princeton University on "The Master Art of Teaching," and at the close of it he sounded that high note of consecration which was always present in his own thought of the teacher's work:

"The school is not a knowledge-shop, so much as a great assay of human souls. Edu-

cation means making the most of each and all. By making the many capable of noble life, the weakness that becomes strong by being good, is given a fair chance. The practice of the art of teaching, therefore, is not restricted to one type of mind or character. There is only one duty for the teacher to know—the putting first the boy's life and its good. We shall then know that there is somewhere a key to every human soul, and we shall realize that the soul is trying to find its way out far more eagerly than we are trying to find the way in.

"Browning puts it:

> "To know,
> Rather consists in the opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendor may awake,
> Than in effecting entry for a light
> Supposed to be without."

"To him who, diffidently disclaiming all pretension to high scholarship, and secretly yearning to render high service, may ponder his fitness to enter this ministry, let me as an elder brother say that one's very brilliancy of mind,—which has enabled its possessor to surmount easily towering obstacles, and thus lose the chastening effort of acquisition—may mark the bridgeless chasm between the true teacher, who, with upbuilding love, guides tenderly and triumphantly the slowly plodding mind, and him whose easy growth in knowledge may quench sympathy and the capacity for love.

"It is well to be possessed of a trained and disciplined intelligence, to have access to the treasures of science and speculation, to know the best thoughts of the wise, and the sweetest fancies and fairest visions that have visited the noblest imaginations of our own and other days; but it is no mere pious truism to add that the final standard by which here or hereafter each of us is to be measured is not an intellectual one. What, rather, is the secret moral temper of our spirit? Are we living, not to do our own will, but the will of God; not for selfish ambition or pleasure, but for the good of others? Are we in sympathy with that life which was the manifestation of the eternal love and goodness to mankind?

"It is, after all, charity to the soul that is the soul of charity. Here is the largest sphere of the teacher's service. We who have observed the onward march of the years towards the diviner day that is yet to be, have a right and duty to say to you a word of good cheer and of hope and of high expectation. My brothers, the time is coming when . . . He who is Lord of Life and Love shall ask not what high degree of academic knowledge you have won, but rather to what low degree of humble service you have been exalted, that you may be counted worthy of eternal fellowship with Him who was the greatest Teacher of all, because more than all other human teachers He was the servant of all. In simplest verse you will find His will for your life and for mine:

"An arm of aid to the weak,
A friendly hand to the friendless,
Kind words so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless;
The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be little, but they are *all.*"

The measure in which the finer spirits among the masters caught and shared the ideals of John Meigs for the school is shown in this letter, written in 1907, to Mrs. Meigs by Mr. Arthur Judson. Speaking of the loyalty of the Alumni, he says:

"If that spirit lives and grows, then when we are all dead and buried God will still raise up men and women to carry on the work. I believe that given any such high *esprit de corps* . . . the ruling motive cannot fail to be a spiritual one; for the Holy Spirit does not neglect such powerful instruments to its purpose. While we cannot have the power of centuries behind us like Eton and Harrow, I see no reason why our boys cannot have and carry the tradition of centuries of English and American literature, and nineteen hundred years of Christian liberty. Since I began this humble task—(the compiling of a list of Hill boys from the beginning)—mere statistics though it be, at the outset, it has led my thought strangely afar. In the attempt to weld these boys more closely into a unit, I begin to see how some at least of our masters—and I speak mainly for my-

self—have neglected some of those tremendous issues in the interest of Latin on the one hand, or athletics on the other. Great as The Hill may be among American schools, I have a vision of yet greater things. If only our boys can be imbued with a true sense of the real grandeur of a great school and its ideals and traditions; if their thought can be directed to the great world into which they are going, with the desire to be known and make themselves known as sons of The Hill; and if among them year by year shall be Sixth Formers with the humility to accept responsibility and the dignity to command respect, —what may they not accomplish? You and Professor have put the spiritual motive into the school, but it seems to me it is the part of the rest of us, faculty largely, but chiefly Alumni—to realize it in such way as to make it seem to the boys not as something handed down to them from above, or as imposed on them by authority, but as ingrained in the very fabric of the structure, a part of the very air they breathe while here, bequeathed by the noble examples of two generations of Hill graduates and backed by the influence of the whole graduate body. In this young country, if we cannot be descendants, we can at least, and more worthily, become ancestors of unborn generations. There, it seems to me, is a thought generally overlooked—at least I do not remember to have often heard it—but in it I am only just beginning to find my true inspiration. . . . It will certainly sweeten my efforts to feel that I begin to

understand what you and Professor have been aiming at, and that I may have the privilege of revealing it to some other life."

But the depth and permanence of John Meigs' influence upon the men who served with him came perhaps to fullest consciousness in those who from The Hill went out to assume for themselves in other places tasks and responsibilities like his. One of the men who thus passed from the faculty of The Hill to more commanding work was Mr. Frank W. Pine, now headmaster of the Gilman Country School, near Baltimore; and the words that follow are from him.

"I shall never forget either my first visit to The Hill or the first weeks and months spent there as a teacher. I went down to the school for a week-end in response to a telegram from Professor. I can still feel the thrill I then experienced for the first time as I both saw and heard him in the big chair by the desk in the old schoolroom, leading the singing of that powerful hymn, 'We march, we march, to victory, with the cross of the Lord before us.' I can still remember my complete enjoyment of the story, 'The Birds' Christmas Carol,' as he read it with so much naturalness and spirit on that December night nearly twenty years ago. And I can feel even now the quiet of that room full of boys as Professor prayed at the close of the half hour.

It seemed as if, like Jacob of old, he wrestled with the Lord as he pleaded for the old fellows in college or out in the world and for the fellows of the school. The affectionate mention of the dear ones at home, ending with the petition 'Help us to honor them by our more faithful service here,' still seems to me the epitome of appeal to filial devotion. How many, many times since then have I gone from such a service, after such a prayer with all its earnest sincerity, lifted up in spirit and with a new resolve for better service and more earnest attempt at self-renunciation!

"From those early days of my life as a Hill School teacher, I recall the keen pleasure which I had in sustained effort and the new zeal for accomplishment, inspired by the atmosphere of the school more than by fear of Professor's displeasure at failure or shortcoming, although that wholesome fear was undoubtedly a factor in my service as in that of all other Hill men. I felt instinctively that I was privileged to be a part of a great and growing enterprise, with the spirit and purpose of which, as well as with its methods and system, I was completely in sympathy, an enterprise that fixed and satisfied my ideals and so challenged my best effort. It was a little world, perhaps, sheltered by his power —you felt that—you had a sense of security in your work—but it was also the city on the hill, whose light shone out far and wide. There was a buoyancy, a spirit of energetic enthusiasm that was contagious. Everybody was systematically yet happily busy. There

seemed to be never an idle minute. The background of this picture was equally satisfying —a combination of perfectly kept equipment and quiet appointments, bespeaking good breeding, artistic taste and culture. Through it all appeared a seriousness of purpose not obtrusive, yet hardly concealed by the various devices for interesting the boys in the realities of life and leading them more or less unconsciously through the commonplace, normal experiences of boyhood to the contemplation of the things of the mind and the spirit. Whether in the genial and comfortable air of the dining-room, amid the varied activity of the athletic field, or in the more rarefied atmosphere of the schoolroom chapel, there was the same heartiness and stimulus, physical, intellectual and spiritual, and the center of it all, the animating spirit of this city on the hill, was Professor. As time went on I came to realize more and more that Professor was the soul of that enterprise. It was the biggest part of his life and he was in it and through it. Its ideals were his ideals and its system was the device of his genius for making those ideals practical and applying them to the everyday problems of life. There all fine character-molding influences were brought, with a rare discrimination of their values; there were generated also high ideals of body, mind and spirit; ideals of sportsmanship, of civic duty, of ethical and moral principle, of religious conviction. Such ideals were sure to receive rude shocks when they came up against the sordid realities of life,

and it was right here that the unusual quality of Professor's character displayed itself. Hand in hand with the constant presentation of these ideals went a stern discipline, a severe training of all the faculties of mind and body that generated a power which enabled the ideals more often than not to survive the shocks, and to inspire strong purposeful lives to enduring accomplishment, as witness the type of service now being rendered by Hill School men in all walks of life.

"The great thing about Professor was this fine balance in his strong character between the ideal and the practical. His sun-clad vision was constantly lifted to the hills from whence came his help, yet his feet were firmly planted on the earth. He had hitched his wagon to a star, but the axle was always greased. You felt here was a soul inspired by a lofty ideal, a noble aspiration; here was a dreamer of dreams, yet no visionary sentimentalist—all about you both in material things and in the life of the school and the accomplishment of old Hill fellows were indisputable evidences that he had the power and gift to make his dreams substantial realities. In this daily contemplation of great faith and concomitant works, you were made hopeful of your own emotional impulses and only ashamed when you failed to translate spiritual exaltation into concrete action.

"Only those who have gone out from the protecting shadow of The Hill, with its wonderful system perfected in every detail, to

struggle with problems of school life and administration in the making can appreciate to the full the debt of gratitude that every man who came under the influence of his personality and character owes to John Meigs. In the first years of my work as a headmaster, when I was confronted by many and varied problems, I found that I invariably asked myself the question, 'What would Professor do in this case?' and the astounding thing to me was that just as invariably I seemed to find the answer. I had stored away in my mind unconsciously a very clear impression of what he would do under the circumstances. I have no doubt my experience has been that of the many other men who have gone out from The Hill into executive positions, only to find how great is the debt they owe to the spirit and genius of the great Headmaster under whose guiding influence our powers were trained, our characters molded, our ideals fixed."

And from under the shadow of the great war, Professor W. S. Milner, of the University of Toronto, Canada, who also was once a master at The Hill, thus expressed what the spirit of John Meigs meant to the lives it touched:

"I could wish no greater thing for my country, in this great hour of her history, than the appearance at the close of the war of only a few such schoolmasters. They

would affect our whole future. For it is the simple truth that here was a man with a genius for organization, with abounding vitality and a passionate zest for life, with extraordinary power over his fellow men, living in a period when the fantastic could be made the actual, who deliberately put from him thoughts of material achievement, and gave himself not to the bending or breaking, but to the making of men."

In the address on "The Ideal Home School,"—the first address from which we quoted—John Meigs goes on after speaking of the masters to speak of the influence of the older boys upon their younger companions. He tried at The Hill to make use of this to the utmost, by his personal touch upon the older boys. In this respect more than in almost any other it is impossible to disentangle his own work from what Mrs. Meigs did at his side. Between them they would bring to bear upon the stronger boys the power of a very great and challenging expectation, and they made these boys feel that in their hands rested not infrequently the real shaping of the spirit of the school. There was a Christian Association, open to all the boys, which held its services every Wednesday evening in the three-quarters of an hour between supper and study-hour, the

commencement of which was postponed thirty minutes; and though different masters were often invited to lead these, the conduct of them was more often in the hands of the boys themselves. Here was a chance for the influential boys to keep lifting up before the others their own fine insistence on manliness and honor and the sort of religious loyalty which was linked directly up to the duties of every day; and John Meigs was always swift to reinforce this opportunity by his advice and counsel to the boys concerned. But in the main, of course, the sort of leadership to which he inspired the picked boys could not be traced in definite times and places. It concerned rather the spirit and ideals of work and conduct which they themselves were led to believe in, and which through them would pervade the public sentiment of the school.

His own genuineness, and his keen sense of the ridiculous, kept him from ever falling into the danger of encouraging the kind of exclamatory pretense which sometimes passes for religion. He himself was never profane in so much as a syllable, but there is a story of how he listened once, with peals of laughter, to one of the best-loved masters, who was a great wag, describing, to the confusion of a second master, the indignation of this second one over a boy named James whom

he had vehemently pronounced to be a "d——d pious hag." The religion which John Meigs led the boys to understand and seek after was no artificial piousness; but it was a deep and manly and straightforward choice of Christ as pattern and Master and Lord. Under the title, "Religious Work in Secondary Schools," he once made his ideals plain:

"As with the aspiring athlete and the eager learner, so must it be with the young Christian. He must be taught to study the great Book of rules for daily living; to seek his great Captain in difficulty, and ask for guidance in prayer; to heed the coach who has gained wisdom and victory in his longer game of life; and to share counsels, joys and confidences in brotherly meetings for prayer. He must realize that the test of his religious life is what he *is*, and what he *does*, when he is *not* on his knees in prayer, *not* reading his Bible, *not* listening to great preachers, and *not* participating in religious meetings.

"The fellows who are Christian leaders should be as carefully trained as football and baseball captains, and great stress should be laid on these pivotal members of the spiritual forces of the school. Just here lies the great peril of all organized religious training in schools. It is so easy for these things to become merely traditional or perfunctory, or, worse still, a pitiable sop to the Cerberus of

school authorities, who are often presumed by boys to be incapable of differentiating the real from the unreal, and to enjoy existence in a fool's paradise."

It was not unusual for John Meigs to pick out for responsibility boys whose record on the surface seemed unpromising. He had a keen eye to judge the real possibilities of loyal strength that might lie hidden under the turbulent and undisciplined exterior.

A memorandum among his papers contains these words:

"The largest, strongest characters among boys who make the most trouble most need to find their place. They most truly have a place to find. The commonplace boy fits in anywhere and makes no trouble; but in that graceless, awkward, interfering character is a real pivot—if you can help it into its right place—to help hold the world together and let others revolve on it."

Here is an incident which reflects his dealing with the sort of boy just spoken of, told in the words of the lad concerned:

"The afternoon of the track meet with Lawrenceville on their grounds in the spring of 1905, Professor, on learning that we had won by a very close score after a most exciting

meet, called another boy and myself to the study. We did not go to the meet with the rest of the Sixth Formers, because of divers 'D' lists, and perhaps other causes, too, which is not unlikely, although I have forgotten. Professor's interview with us was short; he briefly told us that we were to have charge of the whole school that evening in all things pertaining to the welcoming of the team home and the celebration; that the boys should not go off bounds; that we could have certain fireworks and a bonfire, but that we personally would be responsible for any breach of discipline by anyone, and that he would announce to the school that we two were in charge of them. This was all the more surprising to me because Professor raked me over the coals severely only a day or so before for my poor stand in studies and for bad conduct. I won't go into detail as to how it all went off. It suffices to say that the fellows behaved themselves better than anyone expected. Within a day or so Professor called me to the study, as I believe he had already done with the other boy, complimented me on the manner with which everything went off, and finished by saying: 'You mustn't think I tried to put the school on its honor not to have a repetition of that wild outbreak we had on the return of the football team from Hotchkiss last fall. It was not that, though I knew this way would be effectual, but I just wanted to find out, Ted, what sort of stuff you and Neil were made of.'"

And with reference to the responsibility which he felt for boys who seemed unresponsive to the best things, he wrote:

"How shall this influence be exerted? First of all, it must be realized that as possible physical strength and skill may be latent in even the weakest boy, and splendid mental attainments in the dullest lad, so spiritual vitality is possible to the worst fellow. He who would awaken the religious life of a boy must first believe that it is there potentially; the greater his faith, the greater the possibility of awakening that of the boy. He must avail himself of every opportunity to become acquainted with the individual boy's temperamental characteristics. This costs. It takes far more than time. It involves the highest law of life—the old familiar principle that under the divine economy we must lose to gain, and give to get; and as no two boys possess identical characteristics, so can no two boys be reached by precisely the same method. One must therefore know or learn human nature, even through bitter experience and by failure no less than by success; and there will be many a one to the door of whose heart he may not find the key. It may be that only one of the three mighty ones, Love, Life and Death, will hold the key that shall release the slumbering spirit years hence; yet it is our business to knock at the door, try every key that we possess, and, failing, go on undiscouraged to minister

to others for whom we may unlock the mysteries of the kingdom of God."

And again:

"Up to twenty no one can truly say that a boy is absolutely bad, or thoroughly good. His vices and virtues seem to lose definition as in a moral twilight. The average bad boy, so called, with wayward tendencies and love of mental ease and physical activity, may have incipient vices contrasted with his many loving impulses and generous deeds, while the good boy, so called, of clean and moral life is too often selfish, unsympathetic, conceited and censorious. Someone has said:

> "'In men whom men pronounce as ill
> I find so much of goodness still;
> In men whom men pronounce divine
> I find so much of sin and blot;
> I hesitate to draw the line
> Between the two when God has not.'

And, yet, when all has been said and done, despite the best surroundings for a boy's home life, and the most approved methods to stimulate religious consciousness and service, the force that awakens the spiritual life of a boy and inspires him with ideals is above all method and defies all analysis. Though a man have faith in the religious nature of a boy; though he have hope of the potential goodness within him, if he have not love it profiteth him nothing. The coach who wins loyalty, devotion, and co-operation is he who

spends himself for his boys; the teacher who inspires the love of knowledge and fidelity in the quest of it is he who with all his giving to his pupils gives a deep personal interest in their lives and characters; and he who would guide the spirit of a youth through the period when 'childish things' are being put away and manhood's armor put on must meet the individual boy with a heart kindled by a spark of God's love for His weakest child, must sit at the feet of the Great Teacher who spake as never man spake, must have the eyes of his understanding enlightened by the Spirit of All Truth, and above all possess that love which hopeth, believeth and endureth all things. The first Christians saw God in His divinest relation through the human friendship of Christ; and He who would lead His other sons along the same path as our Great Master must strive to give the same human friendship to him in whom he would awaken and deepen the consciousness of his birthright and his sonship in the Kingdom of God."

The boys responded to his trust because, instinctively, they felt that underneath his authority and his discipline—which could be swift and severe—there was the heart of the man who understood the boys' enthusiasms and the boys' resentments, too. In their moments of truest realization they knew what he was, and what he was trying to do for them. "To me," wrote one, "he was never

an aloof personality, never just a headmaster or a very good man; he was just human; got mad quickly, forgave twice as quickly, knew and recognized the boy's code of justice, and, what was more, lived up to it; for when he was wrong he admitted it so fairly and impetuously that the boy who thought that he had been wronged, when he went into the study, left there a staunch ally of Professor, the school and the whole institution of justice."

Sometimes the fact that he was "just human" led to funny consequences. Once in the Wednesday night service of the Christian Association of the school, one of the boys was telling the other boys that they ought to make it a point to know the Professor. He was very emphatic about it, and told them that they ought to go to his study now and then just to see him and talk about things in general. One boy, at least, thought this was a good idea; so a day or two after that he went to the headmaster's door and rang the bell. The little electric latch clicked, and the door opened. The boy walked in. The Professor was sitting bent over his desk at the far end of the big room, deep in some pressing work. As the boy paused he looked up suddenly, and shot out—"What do you want?" The boy stood speechless, and as soon as he re-

covered his wits, he decided he did not want anything, and beat an immediate and silent retreat.

But the " humanness " of him showed itself more characteristically in the swift intuition which understood the boys and mingled authority with playful tact. One day a boy came into the study to ask permission to go away for a visit to near-by relatives over Sunday. The headmaster seized him with mock roughness, ran his hand through the boy's shaggy hair, pulled a quarter from his pocket, and announced, " No boy of mine can go away from this school with such a looking head of hair as that. Take this to the barber with my compliments, and then come back and we'll see what we can do." The boy returned presently, bringing back the quarter, to get his permission to go away —shorn, and in a general aspect of grins and neatness which passed inspection triumphantly.

He knew how, also, to lay aside the relationship of headmaster and share fun with others on their own terms. Here is an incident which Mr. Rolfe, one of the masters, recalls:

" Professor was as jolly and care-free as a boy when he was away from the school and

its responsibilities. I went with him and three or four boys once to visit a famous authority on Indian relics, who lived near Trenton. The day was one long lark, and finally we persuaded Professor to share our chewing-gum. He chewed vigorously for a while, but as we approached the house of our distinguished host, he thought it wise to remove the gum and throw it away. It stuck to his fingers and finally, to our great delight, he sat down to dinner with hands well besmeared with the sticky stuff. He seemed to enjoy the joke as well as anyone, and we were all delighted to see that Professor could lay aside his dignity and be a boy with boys."

So, in spite of the fact that he was often under tremendous pressure in the work of the school and sometimes seemed swift and summary in his decisions, the boys knew that his spirit kept its kinship with their own. They knew it best of all in the times when they thought they had reason to fear him. Once, at one of the reunions of the Alumni—which came every year in May—one of the men who had blundered badly was thanking the Professor for his kindness and consideration for him; and he replied—"Dick, we are all of us so very human."

"O Howard!" he wrote to one of them, as he recounted the way in which at the end of the school year certain boys had revealed in themselves so much more that was fine than

he had given the credit for being there, "what lessons of forbearance and charity and love we all need to gather!"

His own great eagerness to find in a boy all that was best, to recognize it and to bring it in spite of all difficulties to expression, showed itself most impressively in his attitude toward the boys whom he had to expel. When a boy's influence seemed to him hurtful to the school, he could be relentless against all pleading of parents that he should remain; yet none the less his own affection suffered keenly, and he left nothing undone to show that though the boy had failed at The Hill, he would do all that he could to help him elsewhere not to be a failure.

"You will believe," he writes to a mother whose son has broken a rule for which the penalty was expulsion, "that nothing but the most urgent duty to the school could constrain me to take a step which my heart so shrinks from for your sake and ours; and if in any way, now, or hereafter, I can be of service to you, by counsel or suggestion, I pray that you will give me this poor boon that may mitigate perhaps my sorrow in view of my helplessness now to serve you as my affection would prompt.

"I need not assure you that as N. . . . goes from us he will be attended by our af-

fectionate prayers for his strengthening and quickening in the supreme matter of unselfishness, which more and more appears to me to be the foundation and culmination of that which is to be desired in this life."

To the guardian of another boy he wrote of his feeling that the boy "with his past record might be a more acceptable member of a day school than of a family school, his present life in either, so far as overt acts are concerned, being free from the grave faults of the past. I feel less and less, year by year, like prophesying as to the future of any boy, no matter how flagrant may be his boyish delinquencies, and I stand ready to co-operate with any boy who sincerely desires a new life and who, from the circumstances of the case, can better pursue that life elsewhere than here."

To the head of another school he wrote, concerning a boy whom he had sent away from The Hill:

"My letter of this morning was somewhat abbreviated owing to my desire to reach an early mail, and I feel that I am hardly doing justice to you or to myself to allow my brief communication of this morning to stand for my final word in such questions as may be involved in the dismissal of a boy by one school and the recommendation to a friend to give him a new life, especially under such circumstances as exist in . . .'s case.

"I believe that we schoolmasters must be men not only of a 'larger hope,' but of the largest possible hope; that were it not for this our responsibilities would crush the joy out of our lives. And as my years increase and, perhaps, my infirmities of mind as well, I seem to be conscious of a deeper sorrow, approaching agony at times, when, to prevent confusion of moral distinctions in the minds of my other boys, I am compelled to adopt the heroic course of dismissal in the case of any lad.

"I cannot help reaching out a hand to him, despite his well-merited discipline, and yearning over him as he leaves The Hill as if it were his birthright to be here, so far as any act of mine is concerned. I want to give each boy in such a case a fresh start. I believe that most boys experience so violent a shock in undergoing this discipline that, if their fault is frankly acknowledged and earnestly repented, they are likely to learn a lifelong lesson from the ordeal.

". . . has confessed and declared both his desire and purpose to lead a blameless life, if only he can have a new chance. His father is a man for whom I have the highest regard, and will reinforce to the uttermost anything that can be done to uphold and strengthen his boy. If you can take him into your school, knowing as you do the truth in the case, I know that you will merit the grateful approbation of those most deeply involved and of,

"Yours most faithfully,

"John Meigs."

His faithful sense of a bond with every boy who had ever been at The Hill continued toward these boys whom he had sent away. Though they might not remain as boys in the life of the school, he wanted them to feel that his sympathy followed them, and that in after years there was always a welcome for them if they came back to The Hill. When he was ill and away from the school in 1907, he wrote back to one of the masters who was working to compile a list of all The Hill boys of former years:

"This is a great work—the reclaiming of missing, perhaps lost, sons whom we shall welcome in scriptural terms—nor do I believe that the grouchy elder brother of the parable will be found to chill the prodigal's or the father's heart."

Not only in relation to the crisis of boys' transgressions, but in happier and also in more playful circumstances he would often show his affection for the boys who came to The Hill, and his quick understanding of those things which in themselves are little, but which to a boy can mean so unforgetably much. Here is one incident which the boy who was concerned in it told,—and there were others like it.

"Professor did a thing for me once, so thoughtful and so generous that the mere telling of it cannot fail to appeal to the generations of boys as they come on. In the fall of either '97 or '98, I was on the football team, was in poor scholastic standing, and was altogether, I fear, rather a trial. Our season was almost ended, and one of the great games was to be played in Philadelphia; it was either Harvard vs. Penn, or Penn vs. Indians, I cannot remember which, and was to be played on a Saturday. Friday, Professor announced that the team could go to the game, and then half jokingly added—'Will any member of the team who is not going please hold up his hand?' It so happened that I had no money at all, and not caring to borrow, held up my hand to show that I could not go. I, of course, was disappointed, particularly so as all the rest were so excited about the prospect of seeing the game, but was reconciled to my fate until late that night or early the next morning—I forget which—when Professor's boy came over to my room and said that Professor wished me to go to the game as his guest. Of course, I went; and the next morning in the train Professor called me to him, laughingly showed me that he understood my predicament, gave me five dollars for incidental expenses, and insisted that I be his guest for the party. It all struck me as being so thoughtful, and showing so much insight into my little part in the school life, that I would have jumped off the water tower for him at a moment's notice."

Here and there also, from among the copies of his letters and the recollections of the boys, can be gleaned the evidences of the generosity with which he met the difficulties of those who wanted to be at The Hill and, because of lack of money, thought they could not.

In the carbon files of his correspondence for 1892, there is this letter to a father who had written to say that financial reverses would make it impossible for him to send his son back:

"I trust you will not misunderstand me when I say that it will afford me great pleasure to expedite the matter in any way within my power. . . . I should esteem it a pleasure and a privilege to so abate the regular terms as to make it possible for C. . . . to return.

"I need not say that no one, not even Mrs. Meigs, need know of this proffer, and my heart goes with the invitation that I shall feel robbed of a personal privilege if you deem it inexpedient to accept my suggestion in the spirit of cordiality and fraternal feeling in which it is offered.

"C. . . . has so won our confidence and respect, and has so honestly and so loyally utilized the advantages of the school that I should welcome him under the conditions that I have indicated, to our household and school for another year.

"Permit me to say that it has been my

happiness to do this very thing in the case of other boys on less assuring personal grounds, and as I shall feel in my heart of hearts so sincerely that you have done me a favor in meeting me half-way in the matter, there can never come up a question or suggestion of an obligation save that which a fraternal spirit is glad to recognize.

"Do let me hear from you at your convenience, and be assured of my earnest hope that we may number C. . . . among our boys in a larger and deeper sense next year than ever before."

In one of his letters to his wife he wrote:

"I think seriously of taking D. . . . forcibly and putting him on his feet in respect of a college preparation at least. I have learned of his kindly, self-helpful and hard-working methods by which he is slowly advancing, and I hope to do more with the gritty little chap."

From one of the boys comes this further record:

"My most vivid recollection of him was the time my mother came to take me away to another school. Professor, before he had even seen me, offered to prepare me for college for less than the regular rate. He knew my family had very little money. About a month after my arrival at school a friend secured a free scholarship for me at Lawrence-

ville. When my mother came for me, we went to the study to say good-by to Professor and thank him for having taken me as he had. In that short time I had grown to love the school and those connected with it. I broke down as I was saying good-by. This so touched Professor that he offered me a free scholarship at The Hill. I spent the three happiest years of my life at school, and never did he make me feel that I was on a different footing from that of any of the other boys."

At this point it is fitting to tell the singular and romantic story of one especial lad whom John Meigs befriended. The story has its beginning in Japan.

In a Samurai family of noble rank and ancient inheritance the boy with whom the story has to do was born. He was trained in all the traditions of Japanese culture and in the religion of his forefathers. Once, when his little sister was sick, his grandmother bade him go and pray to the god of the shrine under the fir tree. So up the hill he went to pray to the god of the fir tree. And since his sister recovered this god served to satisfy his boyish religious ideals.

Later, as he grew up, he went as a student to the Imperial University at Tokio. By this time he had begun to ask questions which none of the religious teachers whom he found

could answer. He was particularly concerned about the question of life after death. He could not bring himself to think that after the life here on this earth, the soul perished with the body. But from the ancient religions of Japan he could get no clear accounts. Neither could he find any satisfaction from the Buddhist priests. They talked of an absorption into the universal spirit. But he did not want to be absorbed. Without knowing exactly what he sought, he knew that his spirit, with a kind of imperial insistence, was seeking after a more personal and uplifting message.

One day he was passing by the entrance to the park in Tokio. There a missionary was standing, selling books. Kentaro—which is the name we shall call him by, since for certain reasons it is not fitting that we should use his own—was arrested by what the man was saying,—"Everlasting life! Everlasting life! If you drink this you will live forever!" Kentaro stopped and bought one of the books he was selling. He went home with it; and when he had gone into his own room, he sat down to investigate what the thing was that he had bought. To his indignation he found that it was a New Testament—the book of the "foreign devils"—propaganda of the religion he had been trained to despise. He

took it back furiously to the old man at the gate of the park. With hot abuse he demanded that he give him back his money. The old man started to comply,—but he asked him,—"Have you read it?" Kentaro said contemptuously that he had not. Then the man replied, "I see by your cap that you are a university student. I presume that you have studied logic. You have been taught that it is not logic to condemn something which you have not proved by reading. Will you not take this book and read it? That is all I ask of you. If, after you have read it, you want your money back, I will give it to you cheerfully." Kentaro was struck by that appeal. That was fair, he recognized. So he took the book home again in order that he might read it.

Once again he went into his room alone. He opened the book and turned the pages carelessly. This was what his eyes fell upon: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The words went through him like an electric shock. Here was something that claimed to be an answer to his seeking.

Time went by. Kentaro read the book more and more. He became a Christian. One day he went back to the old man at the

entrance of the park and told him so. The old man burst out weeping. "Ten years," he said, "I have been selling New Testaments here at the park gates, and you are the first who has ever come to tell me you were helped."

But when his father found that his son had accepted the foreign religion, all the scornful pride of his ancient traditions and his ancient prejudices rose hot within him. When the boy came next into his room he found on his table the naked hara-kiri sword. He did not need to be told what it meant. As one of the Samurai he knew. He was regarded to have besmirched the honor of the family, and he should kill himself by his own hand. He took up the sword and prepared very coolly to carry out his father's purpose.

When he was ready he knelt down first to pray. Then of a sudden it seemed as though a message came to him, clear and vivid as a living voice. "Your earthly father has cast you off. Commit yourself to your heavenly Father." He rose from his knees. He put the sword back into its sheath.

Not long afterward he left home an exile. He came to America seeking a Christian land and Christian guidance. All his life he had been accustomed to luxuries. He was penniless now, an alien in a new land, faced with

dismaying hardships. He made his way to Washington, seeking help and advice from the Japanese embassy. He was told that his father had forewarned the embassy that no help should be given him.

From Washington he reached New York with five cents in his pocket. He spent it to take a street car to Central Park. There he sat down on a bench,—homeless, friendless, and knowing hardly a word of the language of those who went by him in the great, strange city. He meant to spend the night on the bench, but a policeman arrested him and took him to the lock-up. He had in his pocket a little English dictionary, and he opened it and pointed to the word "innocent." The officer was impressed, and sent him to the Bible House, where he was befriended and put in the way of employment.

He made his way then, as best he could. For a while he sailed on a coast-wise ship along New England; once was wrecked and almost drowned. He worked on farms, and as a servant. Finally, when he was a servant in the house of a family in the city of New York, the family became interested in him. They learned the story of his birth and breeding and of the adventure that had brought him to America. They made him not a servant, but a brother and friend.

A son of the family was secretary to the China Inland Mission, in Toronto, and there Kentaro went. Another official of the mission in a nearby city took the lad into his home in order that he might attend the local high school, but later when this friend suffered financial reverses, it was necessary that Kentaro should find some definite way of livelihood. One of the sons of the family had been to The Hill, and he wrote to Dr. Meigs asking him if he would put Kentaro on the list of the lecturers whom he used to have come from time to time to speak to the boys. Kentaro went to The Hill to speak about Japan. When he got there John Meigs claimed him and kept him. He was to stay at The Hill School henceforth—and did stay —to the end of his short life.

Kentaro was very popular with the boys, but his great work was done outside the school. Out in the quarter of Pottstown which lay beyond the school, he developed a mission—he, the Christian from Japan, bringing Christ to the people in a Christian land. He had an almost marvelous influence over the people. He loved them and they loved him. He was intimate with all their homes, and all their problems, and all their interests. He shepherded them one by one—old and young. A chapel was built and he was superin-

tendent of the Sunday school and minister, too.

So, for three years, his life and work went on. He lived at the school, but he worked mostly at the mission. In the summer he generally used to go and visit some of the boys, who were devoted to him and used to invite him to their homes.

At the beginning of the third summer he had not been well. He caught a deep cold which seemed to have become fastened upon him. It went into swift consumption; but no one knew it.

Some weeks before the opening of the school in the fall, Dr. Meigs wrote him that the family were going back to The Hill, and that they would expect him when they were back. But Kentaro, with a sensitive etiquette that had been bred into the nature of him, had a feeling that he should not come back to The Hill until at least twenty-four hours after the family had arrived and been settled. It chanced that he arrived in Philadelphia a good many hours before that period which he had set for himself had elapsed. He stayed in the station all day instead of taking the first train for Pottstown. He was consumed then with fever.

That night, as Dr. Meigs was sitting at the supper table, he saw Kentaro pass the window.

He rushed out to meet him. The boy staggered and fell into his arms.

He was put to bed at once, and it was plain that he was very ill. Before many days the doctors told Mrs. Meigs that his death was near. She determined that she would let him know.

So one day she went into his room and she said, "I have some wonderful news for you."

He was lying back weakly on the pillows, but the black eyes flashed in surprised anticipation.

"You are going," she said, "on a long and wonderful journey. The most wonderful journey in all the world."

"I," he said wonderingly, "I on a journey?"

"Yes," she said; "you are going to where you will see Jesus Christ."

He lifted himself up on his elbow, "You mean," he said, "that I am going to die?"

"Yes," she said, "that is one way men call it."

"Soon?" he questioned.

"It may be very soon," she answered. "It may be even to-night."

He lay back on his pillow and a great light filled all his face. "To think," he said, "that I may see Jesus Christ; that I may see my Master, it may be even to-night!"

So, not very long afterward, he went on his wonderful journey. Up in the sky parlor of The Hill School is the hara-kiri sword, with it seven-hundred-years-old Damascus blade, keen and shining. On the hill opposite the school stands the tower of the chapel where Christ was preached and where He is worshiped to-day through the influence of the exile from across the seas, whom the hearts of John Meigs and his wife received and sheltered.

From two of the boys of The Hill come the following:

"When I think of Professor, instantly I find myself thinking of almost everything that was characteristic of The Hill, and to try to describe what he was is no less an undertaking than to describe the whole spirit and genius of the school. And not any one of us, and hardly all of us together, can do that.

"I remember when I first saw him. It was the night in September, 1897, before school opened. I came by myself from the depot in Pottstown up to the school, lonely and a little afraid of the school I was coming to, because it seemed so far from home, and because everything about it was so utterly unknown and strange. The carriage I came in stopped at the front of the steps leading up to the front door of the school. I went

up them and rang the bell. A boy opened the door, and I told him who I was, and then from somewhere the Professor came, great, hearty, loving, with his hands outstretched to greet the shy new-comer, and instantly his welcome made the whole school seem a friendly place."

"I came to The Hill knowing no boys nor any teachers. I had never been separated from some members of the family before in my life, and being thus left apparently the only friendless boy in the school, I became frightfully homesick. The Professor had always been held up to me as one to be respected and admired, but never to be approached. When I could stand it no longer, I scraped up courage and rang his study door-bell. Instead of confronting the stern disciplinarian I expected, I received a heart and hand as kind as ever a mother's could be. When I had told, with tears running down my cheeks, how I should die if I remained in school any longer, Professor Meigs took one of my hands in his and talked to me as I never hope to be talked to again. He sympathized with me, told me how my parents wished me to stay, and ended by saying that he always liked to have the boys get homesick, for it showed they came from good homes and they would miss The Hill just as much when they left it. I remember I promised to say until Christmas, but in less than a week I had gotten all over those homesick feelings. I never regretted the trouble I had, though, for it showed me

the soul of the man whom I never got over loving, although I stood in great awe of him at times."

Thus to many a boy at The Hill did there come the widening understanding of the many-sided spirit of the man who controlled its life. They knew that he could be stern with the authority of an unflinching purpose; they learned that he could be wondrously loving, too. The time arrived when in veriest truth their hearts, in the words of his ideal, would return to the school "as to the real home of their souls, a haven of imperishable sympathies and high inspirations." And as they have thought of The Hill, they have thought of it as permeated with the personality of John Meigs. They remember his strong voice asking the blessing at each meal when the whole great family sat down together, and in his accents the familiar words come back, "Father in heaven, graciously add Thy blessing to these gifts of Thy love, and accept of us, for Christ's sake. Amen." They remember how in the evenings from the study door he would come striding with that heavy form of his down the "second-hall" and up the stairs to the schoolroom, reaching out suddenly to lay hold of some darting figure of a boy and carry him with him in his arm. They remember him as he

was at prayers. And remembering him, it is as though they heard again the warm and living voice which spoke from the great heart "so very human," beating at the center of a manhood yearningly akin to the best within themselves; and they know that little by little they learned from him, as "Tom Brown" learned in the chapel at Rugby from Thomas Arnold, "the meaning of this life: that it is no fool's or sluggard's paradise into which one has wandered by chance, but a battlefield ordained from of old, where there are no spectators, but the youngest must take his side, and the stakes are life and death."

CHAPTER VII

THE MAKING OF MEN

The Principles Wrought into the School—Insistence on Obedience—Hatred of Insincerity and Sham—John Meigs' Passion for Purity—Physical Training as an Aid to Moral Soundness—Public Service as the Duty of Privilege—Meigs' Own Civic Activities—Religious Loyalty as the Goal of His Ideals for the Boys.

IT is somewhat difficult to indicate a quite clear distinction between the subject of this chapter and that of the one just closed. Both treat of the ideals of John Meigs for The Hill as worked out in the fifteen years between 1885, when the school came fully into his possession, and 1900. But under this general continuity of subject, there is this difference. The chapter preceding had to do with his ideals as they were related successively to the various classes of persons who made up the life of the school—the mother of the family, the masters and the boys. This chapter will deal less directly with persons and more with qualities—the qualities of mind and heart which he sought to develop in the boys of The Hill.

He realized keenly that one of the great

problems of a schoolmaster rises out of the imperfect training in many homes from which boys come. His responsibility was not only to preserve that which the boys with finest family influences had received, but to bring to a number of others that gift of idealism and earnest purpose which the superficiality of their homes had never inspired. Of this he speaks thus in that same address on "The Ideals of the Home School," which was quoted in the previous chapter:

"The best schoolmaster is only half of the problem—the best parent is the other half. Too few boys get a fair start in their homes.

"The foundation of their education is not laid where alone it can be laid as it should be, through continual care and discipline of the children and of their parents. Boys too often arrive at school quite unfitted for the life that meets them there, because parents do not realize this immense influence of early discipline and training.

"The reason why we have in this world of ours so many dull and stupid men is because in their early years the patience and love that should have striven to find and develop these germs of intelligence were lacking in those who had their care.

"It is easier for a parent to let a child grow up selfish than unselfish; ungrateful than grateful; and thus it comes to pass that a boy enters school ready to take everything

he can get in the way of pleasure and self-gratification, and feeling resentment against any rule which seems to prevent indulgence of this gratification. It is really late to learn to give up because he ought.

"It should be a parent's aim to have his boy what every boy ought to be. A young girl is apt to be trained to give up—a boy to demand. In tacitly allowing in childhood one sex to look down upon the other, the foundation is laid of the spirit by which a man gains the advantage, when he is grown up, of being able to despise what he uses for his own selfish purpose.

"Our truly unselfish men are those who either through their homes or through some other outside cause have been controlled during their boyhood and young manhood, and thus drawn out of themselves and forced into action for some idealistic motive."

In the first sentence of this same address, it will be remembered, he had said: "In the ideal home boys are early taught obedience, truthfulness, purity, unselfishness, service."

As between the boys who had, and the boys who had not been thus taught at home, there was a difference in the difficulty of the task which faced him in the school, but for all alike it was directed to the same end. He wanted to deepen in those who particularly understood, and to create in those who had still to learn, the realization of what obe-

dience, truthfulness, purity, unselfishness, service, meant for them.

The obedience of which he spoke was no slavish subjection to a reign of fear. It stood in his thoughts for the boy's willing conformity to the right standards of the school which all must accept who were to accept its life. On this point he could have no refusal and no evasion. "His vital and fatal lack," he wrote to the father of one boy who was about to be sent away, "is that of obedience. He has so indulged himself that self-pleasing is the law of his life, and deference to a higher law seems repugnant to the boy. . . . It is needless for me to specialize his derelictions; they have all lain along the line of disloyalty to our known rules and wishes, and even in several instances where he had received particular instructions and cautions, we have had to recognize the same spirit of pertinacious wilfulness and insubordination. The reflex action of such a spirit upon younger boys, and even upon older ones, if it be unchecked and unchanged by such restrictions and discipline as are brought to bear upon it, is of a grievous nature, and your . . . experience will reinforce my position touching the vital necessity of submis-

sion to law as the primal condition of moral, as well as physical, life and well-being."

That obedience meant in his thought not the mere submission to rules which forbade wrongdoing, but rather the earnest and manly willingness to take up loyally the work of the school, is well revealed in this other letter to the parents of a boy who, though continually promising to do better, persisted in an evasive and shifty idleness:

"I agree . . . that his faults are rather negative than positive. . . . Yet so quickly repentant a temperament is, in some respects, a less promising one than is revealed by a persistency or determination in wrong-doing. In the latter case, it often is a question of direction; in the former, a question of purpose and power. We must strive patiently to rouse in him a manlier and more purposeful spirit. He must be made to feel that there is (for him) a greater moral danger in aimlessness than in misdirected aim."

Against such vacillation and shiftlessness, his call was—as he once wrote it—"to gird yourself with might in the inner man" for that obedience which is not to rules but to the high majesty of accepted duty. "The religion of a boy," he wrote on a penciled memorandum of what was evidently a talk he gave in the school, "means learning what

duty is and caring much and always for it. All else is accessory; this is essence."

And with obedience, truthfulness. In no way did John Meigs impress himself more powerfully upon his boys than in his own absolute truthfulness and sincerity and his hatred of everything mean and false. There was nothing tepid in his moral judgments, and no blurring of distinctions which ought to be kept clear.

"I think that the first thing which impressed me," said one of the boys, "was his hatred of a lie or a sham. This was so impressed upon me by one of his talks one morning at prayers, soon after I came, that I made up my mind right there that he would never have to talk about that on my account if I could help it. So many of the boys were afraid of him,—afraid because they had done some wrong that he would not forgive them. They did not know his big heart. I have heard many a fellow say, 'Well, what shall I tell him?' I always said, 'Go and tell the whole truth.' I do not recollect a time when a fellow did go like a man and tell the whole story that he did not get the help that he was seeking and come away feeling that he had a friend he did not know of before he

had the talk with Professor. On the other hand, those who went with excuses and the thought of hiding the fault, came out feeling, oh, so mean and small!"

And two others said:

"Professor's strongest characteristic, as I remember it, was his absolute abhorrence of anything that was deceitful or underhanded, and I remember that he never stole in on any of the boys unawares, either in our rooms or in the schoolroom, as his tread down the hall was always distinctly heard; and I do not remember ever having been spied upon by any of the teachers while at The Hill. I think this way of putting the boys on their honor was the thing which impressed me most during my five years at school.

"I remember the Professor's plain speaking and openness. He never minced matters in talking to us boys in the schoolroom, but I do not think that any fair-minded man, looking back upon those days, can doubt for a moment the Professor's devotion to the very highest principles of manhood, which, from the outset, we all knew he insisted on the school's standing for. I am sure that it was due to the Professor's influence, that there was no sneaking and no cheating."

Yet, though he could feel so intensely in this matter of truthfulness, though he could write to one boy, "Unless you get down to the very bed-rock of character, which is truth-

speaking and truth-loving, you will be unable really to change your life," and though in the case of deliberate falsehood he could be—as one said of him—"terrible as an avenging angel," yet he could be patient and forbearing when he thought that a boy's wrong was capable of some charitable interpretation, and very compassionate when a boy confessed manfully and repented.

"Boys have a great deal of human nature in them," he wrote once, "and men and women are few indeed who do not, on the first impulse, seek to vindicate themselves, despite the apparent or real fault that they may have committed."

And again:

"Where a boy does what he knows as well as we to be wrong, and has the honesty and courage to admit it, whatever be the character of the offense, he may be sure that I am ready to go to the death with him—while his spirit is right."

How his heart agonized when the boys had proven false, this letter best can show:

"Saturday has come and brings with it no cessation of the work and worry that has crowded the week. It seems sometimes as if I were losing my grip on things deeper

than physical. I feel that this year more things have happened to humble and discredit me with myself than in almost all prior years combined. I had resolved, vainly, to keep silence as to a most agonizing trial that this week has consummated. We have had to expel four boys for drinking on a driving party, and to put two on probation for a similar offense. Think of my coming home to such a trial, involving Sixth Formers almost exclusively! Their parents, so far as I have heard from them, are simply cruel in their words and feelings, and had I debauched them I could scarcely have been more of a monster of duplicity or wickedness. Then several boys stayed in Philadelphia overnight at the beginning of the term and lied about it, and what is worse, lied, constructively, to their parents and dishonored themselves rankly. I am just used up and feel almost disheartened with other problems to face. God help me! A glimmering of light in this unusual darkness comes through A. . . . who has come to me voluntarily, and after confessing deeper sins than he has ever committed before, expresses his determination to turn absolutely and unreservedly to Christ as his only Saviour from the sin that does so easily beset him. This helps me a bit. S. . . . will probably consent to go with him for the summer as teacher and friend. This is A. . . .'s own idea and shows appreciation of the deepening struggle. God bless him and help him! This is a sad letter; God knows my heart is sadder still. I feel cast

down and almost bewildered. I ought not to tell you this, but it seems sometimes as if my heart would break if I did not."

He knew that the finest truthfulness could flourish not in an atmosphere of fear, but of love only; and such an atmosphere he tried to make the boys he governed feel.

He said:

"Perfect truth can be the outcome only of perfect trust; and perfect trust can be the outcome only of perfect love. The more we love, the more we trust; and where we trust perfectly, we cannot lie. If a child lies, it is because he does not trust; and whose fault is this? Those to whom we cannot lie are those we really love. The most ordinary cause for lying in a child is the desire to escape punishment or to help him get something he wants, or to help him to get it in his own way. Another reason, though more complex, why a child will lie is that he wishes to control his own life. This is the reason generally why grown-up people lie.

"The boy will let you in to help him as soon as he has found you worthy of love. It is very right for a boy to tell the truth, but it is far more important that your boy's character should become a character which cannot tell a lie. Truth is to be gained only by perseverance in its practice by downright hard work. A boy obeys a rule of school because he *must;* if he find himself at a school where

love underlies the rule he will, by degrees, obey because he *ought.* A true disciplinarian must be a true lover. True obedience is the expression of love."

The measure in which John Meigs himself embodied his own ideal of high, yet loving challenge to a boy's truthfulness was nobly expressed in an editorial in the *Outlook* of November, 1911, by Ernest Hamlin Abbott, himself a graduate of The Hill:

"Even those who owe most to him cannot explain his power; they remember, however, certain things that might help to describe it. They can remember that he never appeared suddenly upon them, but that always his heavy footfall, every ounce of his great frame telling at each step, resounded through the corridors as he approached; and in the memory of that sound they find their most vivid impression of what is meant by the hatred of sham, subterfuge and unfairness. They can remember the silence that fell upon the gathering of boys when they saw in his face the suppressed anger at some meanness or pretense, and awaited the words that would fall like cudgels on the offender; and in the memory of such an occasion they find their most vivid impression of what is meant by the searching of conscience. They remember that even while still wincing from some just rebuke they were willing to go to him, if need be, with their confidences; and in that

memory they have their best example of what it means to be chastened as a son."

In the chapel of Eton there hangs, like a silent challenge to all that is high and pure in the soul of a boy, the lovely painting by Watts of the young Sir Galahad—the Knight Unstained. A great print of it hung on the wall of the schoolroom at The Hill, with Tennyson's lines in gilt upon the frame:

> "My good sword carves the casques of men,
> My tough lance thrusteth sure,
> My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure."

With all his power John Meigs sought to make his boys believe that the strength of noblest manhood is built on purity, and that impurity is weakness and shame. As early as 1886, he had begun to feel the urgent duty which rested upon him to educate the boys in this direction. In a letter of November 4th, in that year he writes: "I have sent for three books and a lot of tracts from the *Philanthropist,* adding a mite of surplus for their work. Here lies our great work with our boys, I am persuaded."

More and more, as the years went on, he came to feel with a kind of awful intensity

the dreadful havoc which impure thoughts and purposes and habits could work in a boy's life.

In one of his letters to parents he writes how a boy, after denying certain immoralities, came and "explained to me certain social and domestic conditions which, naturally enough, conduced to such a life as he confessed to have been leading prior to his arrival here. I was deeply moved by the revelations, and expressed, then and there, my desire and determination to render him all the help within my power, compatible with my always urgent duty to the other and younger members of the family, of which he had become a part."

But the boy had not responded to the help held out, and the letter goes on:

"Along the line of evil communications, aside altogether from overt acts committed . . ., the power of impure-minded boys is simply frightful, and my own experience of twenty years confirms me in the conviction that the greatest peril to young boys, in so intimate associations as exist here, is due rather to the moral atmosphere environing boys of B. . . .'s moral character than to the allurements of their wrong-doing, while they are actually and truly under our control and restraint as our life-work with them goes on. In consideration of this, it has become

necessary to drop or dismiss from the school, during the term just closed, six or eight boys —not to punish, discredit or disgrace these boys or their friends, but to preserve such a moral tone in the school as we owe to the parents of the younger and susceptible boys, who become all too easily and unconsciously the victims of those whose lives and characters have not been shaped and guided in a wise and salutary way."

In connection with the mention in the previous letter of "certain social and domestic conditions, which naturally enough conduce to such a life as he confessed to have been leading," the following letter concerning another and wholly different boy finds appropriate place. It is not pleasant reading, but it is worth perpetuating for two reasons: first, because it shows the way in which John Meigs could bring the boys to disclose to him their inmost confidences, and because in the second place, it helps unveil the perils to which—all unconsciously to fathers and mothers—their boys may be subjected:

"I am sure that you will be glad to know that I had last night a most reassuring conversation with T. . . ., touching the matter of his summer's experiences. . . . He told me that the stablemen and butler were impure and vile in their conversation with him, and exerted their pernicious influence to

the utmost in seeking to defile his mind and thoughts by their lewd and abominable talk. He censured himself without stint for not recoiling instantly from their advances, but said that having no congenial associates he drifted into their company all too easily, and once under their spell, so to speak, he found it hard to recover himself. . . . Of course there was no overt act of impurity in which he was engaged, and he now looks back upon his associations with those vile fellows with abhorrence and inexpressible regret. Since his return, he tells me that he has had no conversation with anyone that has served to revive or keep alive his mental state of the summer, but has been steadily regaining his old-time freedom from such besetments. His manner to me was confidential and affectionate, and responsive in the extreme, and I tried to give such practical aid as will, I hope, simplify the dear boy's recovery of his well-earned self-respect of former years."

In another instance he writes to another father:

"Do you feel secure in the matter on C. . . .'s associates and associations in Chicago? The indications that we have had here are such as to throw grave doubts upon their salutary influence.

"Do you really know what he is doing in the hours that are passed from under the family-roof?

"I ask these questions, not to alarm, but

to suggest the reasonable occasion for a closer scrutiny than you have perhaps felt it necessary to give to C. . . .'s irresponsible hours."

As to the depth of his feeling concerning what impurity could mean in moral damage, this letter can best show:

"Looking at my duty to my household from the standpoint of one who is charged with the responsibility that, at times, so presses upon one's spirits that I am constrained almost to cry out in my solicitude for my boys, I have come to the deliberate conviction that of all the disqualifications for membership in my school no other can be compared, in its deadly and inevitable effect, with that of impurity. This is so insidious that sleepless vigilance cannot counteract its diabolical effects. By day and by night its foul trail is made in the lives of boys, young and old, and only God knows how many young souls are imperiled by the pernicious influence of one boy's speech and behavior.

"As for me, I simply cannot tolerate the idea of incurring the responsibility that attaches to me in so far as I actively or passively subject to the influence of a boy who is impure those young natures whose unfolding and upbuilding are committed to me, by their anxious parents, under God. . . . I had rather incur the risk of besmearing the very walls of my boys' rooms with the germs of some foul contagion than to expose young, and it

may be innocent, boys to the peril of deadly immoral contagion, for which I know no remedy short of divinely miraculous interposition."

The longer he lived and worked, the more John Meigs cried out in spirit against the cowardly silence of so many parents toward their boys concerning the great and solemn mysteries of growing life, and the more he realized that loving and positive counsel must take the place of the evasions which leave boys to find out what ought to be holy facts through perverted and degrading ways.

He said in his address already mentioned:

"The diffidence or cowardice or indifference of parents in homes not ideal touching the enlightenment of the young boy as to the facts of life and birth, the recurrent miracle, and yet the very type and embodiment of law, throws upon the schoolmaster, in whose heart the ideals of his school are the measure of his effort, a grave responsibility which is discharged simply and adequately. No boy can sin in ignorance who has been a few weeks a member of his great household."

In the other address, directed particularly to those who were thinking of becoming teachers, Meigs wrote:

"The body, its reverent, radiant uses; the mind, its subtle and intricate processes; the

soul, its strenuous and triumphant emergence from the toils of body and of mind; these seek and find in a true teacher the tender, tireless servant of the whole man. If you would best serve the physical life of youth, as friend, teacher, father, you will find one duty clearly paramount—such a preparation of mind and spirit as will enable you simply, reverently, and faithfully to present to boyhood the truths of the sacred uses of the body, which the cowardice of parents, the perversions of the vicious, or the inanities of the ignorant have befouled or beclouded, to the disaster of body, mind and soul. Should you ask me what most crucial test the vitality of early religious and moral training must survive, I would say that of sexual purity. I have been more and more deeply stirred, year by year, as I have been convinced of the sad havoc caused by the prevalent neglect of parents in dealing with their sons in respect of this fundamental moral question of boyhood and young manhood. United States senators, learned judges, clergymen, lawyers, physicians even, have confessed their failure or reluctance to state simply, reverently, savingly to their sons the truth which might have averted frightful disaster. Parental cowardice, or mock-modesty, is a challenge to the manhood of the teacher, who may not shrink from the faithful declaration of necessary truth whereon may rest the strength that is the strength of ten because the heart is pure. And with body, mind and soul poised so delicately in this impalpable, and yet mighty, integrity, what less

than loving, reverent hands may deftly touch the tremulous life?"

For his own part, John Meigs took up with all earnestness the responsibility of talking to his boys at The Hill in the way in which —ideally—he would have wished that he could be sure their own fathers had already done. Here is one lad's testimony:

"I shall always remember a little talk Professor gave the older boys in his study one time, on right living. Keep yourself pure and everything else will take care of itself, was the subject, and in the course of his remarks he worded the idea about as follows: 'Keep yourself pure and all things will be added unto you,' and it is this expression, so direct in its appeal to ambition, and so wonderfully comprehensive of all of life's teachings, that has ever been associated in my mind with Professor, and has grown in importance each year as I keep realizing more fully its powerful truths.

"I do not think that many of us fellows thought very seriously of this at the time. There is a certain age at which young fellows feel perfectly self-sufficient in respect to their ability to lead a life of integrity and virtue. The exhortation to keep yourself pure is accepted as more or less of a platitude in much the same way as the maxim, 'Be honest and you will be respected,' or the advice to be brave and have the courage of your convic-

tions. In many cases it is not until much later in life that a fellow begins to realize the significance of these precepts in the final molding of his character, in that they are something that he has to fight for. He comes to understand that he cannot continue to follow the line of least resistance and be sure of going straight. He comes face to face with the fact that his self-sufficiency does not amount to much, as the intricate and wider experiences of life force his character to a test at every turn. It is here that the beliefs nourished by the finer associations of his life become strong assets and tide him over, and the pretty phrases of early days grow into convictions and hard learned truths. The words of Professor, 'Keep yourself pure and all things else will be added unto you,' are words of profoundest wisdom, and it is only with the years that one comes to the full appreciation of them."

It was because of the real moral training which he thought they afforded—and not least because of their contribution to purity—that Meigs most valued athletics. This is not to say that he lacked a spontaneous interest in the fun and excitement of the boys' games for the games' sake. On the contrary, he took a keen pleasure in watching the boys play, and nearly always accompanied the teams when they went away from The Hill for the big games on the grounds of the rival

THE UPPER SCHOOL
THE LAST OF THE MAIN BUILDINGS COMPLETED IN JOHN MEIG'S LIFETIME

schools. He understood, too, how intensely much this rivalry meant to the boys' pride, and after some Hill victory in an important game he would often telegraph the results to some one of The Hill graduates among the students in each of the big universities, in order that the news might be spread among the "old boys" there. But though he thus could share the boys' enthusiasm, those who watched him at baseball and football games and knew his attitude to the boys who played, understood that he was thinking of something larger than victory or defeat. He was watching as with the eyes of one who saw the chances for courage, and endurance, and fairness and generosity, and was waiting to see how the boys would meet these finer tests.

On the technical side, the matter of the boys' exercise was very exactly organized. In the opening days of the school, every boy was thoroughly examined by the physical director and the school physician, and a record made of his weight and measurements, his muscular strength and general condition. These examinations were repeated every half-year, and on the basis of them the physical director arranged for the boy whatever particular training he thought advisable. Every boy was required to take part in some form of athletics on every schoolday. In the fall

term, a boy might be on one of the many football teams, or he could play tennis; in the spring term, there was tennis again, and baseball; and a boy had to make report every day that he had taken the exercise required. In the winter term, all the boys were formed into gymnasium classes, which met at assigned hours in the afternoon. For a number of years there was military drill, but this was discontinued in 1902.

One of the happiest choices that John Meigs ever made among the men whom he brought to The Hill was the man who became the physical director. This was Mr. Michael F. Sweeney, himself a famous athlete, and the holder when he came to The Hill, and for many years thereafter, of the world's record in the high jump. As the years went on, the sphere of Mr. Sweeney's control and influence widened. He became not only the physical director of the gymnasium and track work, but also the coach and controlling spirit of all the other organized games in the school. Between him and the headmaster there was a sympathy and understanding which grew into the most loving identity of purpose; and into all his relationship with the boys who were the athletes at The Hill—and therefore the heroes of the boys' world—Mr. Sweeney brought not only his technical skill, but the

power of a Christian idealism which left its deep impress on the spirit of many a lad who would hardly have been reached through any other channel.

This whole higher aspect of school athletics in its relationship to character was expressed thus by the headmaster:

"Physical training also takes high rank in the scheme of the school which stands for ideals of boyhood's training. The high ethical value of physical training needs only to be considered to be recognized as the basal condition of mental and moral discipline. The final test of its efficiency must deal not only with muscular development, but with the achievements of mind and soul. The training of the will and intelligence has its potentials deeply laid in the physical man, and the new physiology and the new psychology are compelling the acceptance by educators of this gracious correlation of the wonders which God has wrought in man. . . .

"The average collegian, if healthy, is more apt at expressing himself fully in terms of muscularity than in terms of mentality; and the obvious fact that college morality improved so wonderfully during the last generation was, undoubtedly, due largely to the influence of athletics which demanded regular habits, clean lives, and pre-occupation for body and mind. The grosser dissipations of university life, in ante-bellum times, could not withstand the new spirit engendered by the

athletic standards, which have as their noblest exponents to-day many men famous for spiritual and intellectual power.

"While one must recognize and deprecate in some cases the physical and moral reaction from the rigorous training which athletics impose during their characteristic seasons, one must admit that in physical training many a boy and young man finds a sufficient motive for integrity of life until the deeper moral and physical forces master his conscience and his will.

"Even schoolboys are trained now to scorn softness and self-indulgence and to prize the finest fruits of self-denial and self-mastery, which are plucked from the tree of life itself. Strength and symmetry of body are happily so co-ordinated in these better days with their logical and spiritual counterpart that each new year adds fresh and convincing testimony to the real content of physical training."

"Obedience, truthfulness, purity"—thus it will be remembered John Meigs named the qualities he desired his boys to win; and then he continued with these,—"unselfishness, service."

He knew many of the boys who came to The Hill came from privileged families, and he knew that some would probably enter into rich inheritances. He understood how important it was that to these boys in particular,

as well as to all boys in general, there should be presented the kind of manly ideals of useful living which would keep them from being contented with indolent indulgence or selfish money-making. Among his papers is this penciled memorandum:

"'Whatever we wish to see introduced into a life or a nation must be first introduced into its schools.'—*Humboldt.*

"It is a wide subject. According to this, we must look to schools for a revival of the simplicity of life, for training in truth and moral courage; for real intellectual training, for giving men the power of hard thought, of seeing things as they are. The school must educate the young to keen social and political interests; must bind classes together in an unselfishness that is often wanting in the weary pleasure-seeking classes; in a word, must revive public spirit. The school must give that self-restraint of the body, that purity of moral tone and conduct, that moral horror of degradation, on which more than anything else the welfare of the nation depends."

Therefore, he tried to bring to the school for talks to the boys as often as possible, men who were doing the kind of virile work in public service which would strike the boys' imagination. Jacob Riis, for instance, when he was in the midst of his struggle to improve the tenement conditions in New York,

came more than once. Theodore Roosevelt, when he was police commissioner, came too. Woodrow Wilson, when he was president of Princeton, made an address on Washington's birthday on "Patriotism." Dr. Frissell, head of the great Hampton Institute, which Samuel C. Armstrong founded for the education of negroes and Indians, used to come, with the Hampton Quartet, and tell the boys of the work of the school, at which their gifts maintained scholarships. John Meigs wanted the boys to have opportunities made familiar to them which would inspire them to generosity with their money, and even more he wished them to learn the great lesson that a real patriotism means also the will to give of themselves in the activities of loyal and unselfish citizenship.

He used to gather the boys of the Sixth Form into his study and explain to them the kind of relationship which later when they came of age they might bear to good government, and impress upon them the importance of voting in primaries and elections. Furthermore, his advice was not theoretical. He did not in his own case allow his school duties to make him narrow and academic, nor to stand as an excuse for withholding his own energies from political matters. He never sought any office for himself, but he threw

his whole strength more and more into struggles which he believed concerned the public good; and when a matter of principle was at stake, he put as much determination into what seemed a small matter as he would have into a great one. At one time, for instance, he joined a number of other citizens of the town in a fight to prevent the appointment as postmaster of a half-ignorant and wholly unqualified man whom the local political ring wished to have rewarded for party services. In the carbon copies of his correspondence of that year are repeated long letters which he wrote the postmaster-general, as well as references to a visit which he made to Washington in person. It is not to be wondered at that he felt strongly about the situation of which he could write as follows:

"We simply awaited the development of the alert and vociferous claimants for the spoils of victory, hoping that the better sense of these men would bring forward names of candidates for the office of a least average morality and repute in the community. We waited in vain, for of the three aspirants, one was disqualified by gross moral unfitness, another alike by increasing bodily infirmity and notorious gambling, and the third [who had been the janitor of the market-house] is even now before you as the reluctant choice and residuary legatee of the

former two, whose numerous and scrupulous advocates seem to fancy that any man in the community is man enough to be postmaster if only he can wear the party collar and read the more legible addresses of the letters."

Besides the immediate result of preventing the appointment of the man against whom he protested, this incident had lasting consequences for John Meigs through giving him an insight into the corrupt indifference to the public good of a strong political element in Pennsylvania.

In subsequent years he threw himself with generous energy into the fight to break the control of this element in state affairs, and to compass the election by the Pennsylvania legislature of a reform candidate for the United States Senate. He did not succeed in this particular effort, but he was none the less ready to do his best when called upon for service on fresh occasions. Into political campaigns which involved issues that stirred his loyalty to what he thought was right, he put the same aggressive power which he had given to his own work at the school.

On his desk for many years he kept before him these words of Goethe's: "*Wo du bist, sei alles*," and he lived up to their challenge in his public as well as his private service.

With relation to the affairs of his own

town particularly was his citizenship forward-looking and unselfish. He offered on one occasion to pay the salary of a teacher of music for the public schools, and helped make possible the appointment of the first health officer. He was the founder and president of the Young Men's Christian Association and when he died he left a large legacy to construct a new building. He inaugurated in the opera house a series of Sunday afternoon services, at which the speaker was the preacher (drawn from among the eminent men of the country) whom he had brought to The Hill for the morning Chapel of that day.

He encouraged the boys to take part in forms of service which he helped suggest and guide. In one of his public addresses he emphasized this point of service for others as one of the ideals in the training of a good school, and in general terms he described what was, as a matter of fact, true at The Hill:

"In a school known to me a summer camp on the coast of New Jersey has been purchased and maintained in the summer vacation for some years by the boys and masters for the benefit of poor boys of the slums of our cities. This service and observation at close range of the less favored classes suggest possibilities of no slight value.

"By the same school a mission is conducted near enough to enlist the active cooperation of older boys and of the masters who conduct the Sunday evening services during the school year; and a boys' free reading-room for the unsheltered and ambitious lads of the town is largely supported by their efforts."

In his regard for activities like these, John Meigs' spirit was concerned with something far larger than the details of the immediate acts of helpfulness. They were for him part of an ideal which centered in the very heart of his desires for the boys. His great hope was that through the practical things he helped them to do for others there might be kindled in them the high consciousness that only as they chose for themselves service rather than self-indulgence could they attain their finest manhood.

Here he well knew that his ideals for the school had reached a height which could not be scaled by human help alone. The memorandum from which we quoted just now the sentences in regard to training in the school for the service of the nation, continued thus:

"And, lastly, the school must educate, develop, guide and instruct that spiritual faculty in the child or boy, which, by whatever name we call it, is supreme. There is no other restraining power [than religion]. Sympa-

thy, the innate horror of doing wrong to a fellow creature; self-respect, the innate horror of doing wrong to ourselves, are real powers with all finer natures. A restraining power is needed. The gratification of passion is an intense reality, and can be held in check only by a still more intense reality.

"This must be physical or spiritual. It must come from the legislator, the doctor, or the teacher. The legislator can only help to diminish crime and does not really touch the case. The motive must come from science or religion. But science gives a feeble sound. Science admits that immorality is damaging to the boy. Science, as yet, does not speak of its effects on character. It is not in science that we are to look for a restraining power. The problem of school morality will be solved by a religious motive or none. In so far as sin is a product of circumstances we must strike at the circumstances; but if sin, and so far as sin, is in human nature, it is necessary to give boys some fresh power to cope with it. To give this fresh power, the power of conquering the selfishness and passions of our lower nature, is surely the end and aim of all education."

At the head of four other pages in his handwriting—which perhaps are notes of a talk to the boys—there stands the reference: I Corinthians iii : 9,—which verse begins "For we are laborers together with God." From the form of this memorandum, as also

of the one just quoted, it is not wholly clear whether the words are John Meigs' own, or whether he was jotting down something he had read somewhere and wished to repeat; but in either case the words express what with intense conviction he believed.

"Are we living with the thought in our minds that a school of any enduring worth must be a center, a focus, a very sacred hearth of the higher life of the time—that there ought to be a clear and active purpose in its leaders, nay, in the majority of its average members, to raise the general life of men in some respect or other, to rectify its standards where they may be defective, to set their faces against things or notions in regard to which the world has gone astray? How many of us can say that day by day we set our faces to all this with any serious or definite aim; that our personal life is marked and characterized by anything which can rightly be called a distinct religious purpose, that we are consciously and methodically and professedly doing anything to raise the moral life, to quicken the spiritual life, to stimulate the intellectual life?

"I think of the time, when from some school, under some influence which as yet we know not, there shall go forth a new generation of men who shall be characterized, not by some special gift, not by some literary accomplishment, or some varnish of culture, but by a combination of gifts and strength

of spirit which shall stamp them as prominent workers, if not as leaders and prophets in the next stage of our country's progress. There is abundant room, to say nothing of a crying need, for these missionaries of a new type, who shall be men of cultivated and disciplined intellect, enlightened and strong; who shall be sworn to the new chivalry of personal purity and the suppression of the baser animal appetites; who shall be men of simple and pure tastes, no epicurean sentimentalists—the declared enemies of luxury, whether vulgar or refined; men, again, in whom public spirit and social purpose shall be practical and guiding motives, not vague and intermittent sentiments, who shall feel the call to alter those conditions of life which are working so destructively in all our cities; men who, with all this, are not bigoted, who shall have learned to know that earnestness and toleration are not incompatible, who shall have no respect, either, for that young man's spurious liberalism which is a child of indifference, nay which is begotten by shallow criticism, of cynicism as its mother and nursed by luxury and want of faith; above all, men whose life shall be guided by a serious and humble and reverent spirit, who may fairly be described as *faithful, religious* and *devout.*"

At the end of the first group of notes which we have quoted was this sentence also:

"We are in danger of pressing into extremes one or the other of two axioms of

education: religion cannot be taught; religion must be taught."

Doubtless what he meant was this:

He was familiar on the one hand with the insistence in many quarters that religion as such cannot be made a part of the school curriculum, because it rests upon a choice that must grow out of the intimate and personal decision of each single personality; but as against this he knew that though religion could not be communicated as a classroom subject, it could be kindled in boys' hearts by the living touch of religious men round them.

On the other hand, the danger of those who cried 'that religion *must* be taught' lay in the direction of the kind of dogmatism which ignores the boys' sensitive reserve and tries to force upon them that which can be given only when affection and confidence have been won.

He wrote once this:

"Religious teaching must be simple, definite, attractive, personal; a Bible-reading scheme within considerate limits is helpful and stimulating. The history of the great nations and of the leaders of religious thought in the Old Testament and the New Testament should be studied and exemplified by their

successors of the later generations, and opportunity given, outside of this systematic study, by the organization of voluntary classes, for the consideration of the spiritual lessons, especially those of the New Testament.

"In his First Epistle to the Corinthians Paul says, 'Knowledge puffeth up; Love buildeth up.' Here then is the ideal of the real schoolmaster—Love as the master-motive of all true life. The Love of which Paul speaks is no protoplasmic ooze of unctuous benevolence nor saccharine complaisance. It is strenuous, aggressive, upbuilding. It inflames the heart and brain to lofty thought and high endeavor; it quickens the mind to command wisdom's riches for the fit endowment of Love's best gift—'the love that tops the might—the Christ in God,'—the love that 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'"

His whole conception of the religion which he sought to inspire in the boys' hearts was tremendously virile,—or, as he said love ought to be, "strenuous, aggressive, upbuilding." He felt with a quivering earnestness the awful reality of the battle between good and evil, righteousness and sin. He began a talk to the boys once with this quotation: "Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, to the Ambassador of the Elector of Brandenburg: 'I will hear nothing and know nothing of neutrality.

His Highness must be friend or foe. When I come to his borders, he must declare himself hot or cold. The battle is between God and the devil.'"

At another time he spoke to them on "this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith," and these notes show the message he sought to bring them:

"Do you think that your life is quite right in its standard and in its attainment? or that the standard and tone among us generally is quite right—let us say in industry, reverence, thoughtfulness? No one would say this. But this standard is the world for us. Is there no temptation to do wrong, because some others do wrong? to cheat in work, because some others cheat? to waste time, to swear, to do worse it may be, because others do? This influence of our surroundings is the world for us. And this is the world that we are set to overcome. How are we, first, not to have our own standard lowered by copying the evil that we see? and, secondly, how are we to help to improve the aims and tone around us? This is what St. John means by overcoming the world. It is something very practical. There is somewhere a power which would enable us to be somewhat more like what God would have us to be, which would make us better and stronger than we are in ourselves; and make our society, our world, better, too.

"Now look at a larger field outside these walls, the hand-workers, and below them a class of boys, and others, neglected from birth, saturated with evil. And the cry of them goes up hour by hour to the ears of the Lord of the whole earth.

"And, meanwhile, what are the lives of our class? The least we can say is that they are not of the standard which Christ holds up. We very rarely regard wealth as a trust: we treat it as a possession. 'It is mine, it is mine. I will do as I please and who shall say me nay?' This again is the world, a hard world to touch and move, because it is contented with its ideals.

"There is the world of failures of our industrial system—the rough, the destitute, the loafer, the idler, the weak who go to the wall.

"And there is the world of the successful, who live at ease, and have little thought of a kingdom of God on earth. There is our worldliness, yours and mine: and we have yet to be conquered. Somewhere there is a power that shall overcome all these worlds of degradation and low ideals. We turn to John and read: 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' It is the declaration, and it is true, that in all these worlds, in purifying the individual life of your single self, or in raising the tone of school morals, or in improving the life and physical conditions, amusements, literature, morality of the lowest class, or in giving largeness and generosity and everyday patriotism to the class

to which we belong—for overcoming these worlds, there is one source of victory, even our faith. How full of hope and force these words are. Here is something that may make the world good and right and beautiful, even our faith.

"There is something awful to me in that little word *our*. It tells us that we, the living generation of men, are the sole instruments through which God works. We do in some sense present to the world the Living Christ, if we profess to be animated by His spirit. The world judges Christ by us. If the world is to be overcome—the selfishness, the squalor, heartlessness, and our own low standard of the possibilities of human society—it is to be overcome by our faith—if the next generation and century are to be better than this.

"I scout the idea that these evils are irremediable. I hate the practical infidelity that says, 'It is no use: the scramble and struggle are a part of human nature: lust and intemperance and mammon-worship have always existed, and always will exist.' This is not faith; it is blank disbelief. Why did Christ come? to tell us that the kingdom of God shall come, and to show us how it is to be won. It is to be won by faith. The weak things of this world, as always, confound the mighty.

"You understand now, what is to be overcome by faith. But can you also understand what faith is? It is the teaching of St. John, in gospel and epistles, that the spirit that

was in Christ is in a measure in all of us, and is leading us on to the Kingdom of God, if we will go with it. Our faith is that the spirit of God still lives in men, and shall rule the world. When that divine life, which was at its full tide in Christ, flows into our dry channels and flushes them, then victory will come. Now we read Christ's words and discount them and explain them away. It will not always be so. Some day we shall believe that He meant what He said; and we are beginning more and more to do so now.

"What hopeful signs there are in the world! There are two camps in every society; and in one of the two we find ourselves, and one of the two you will join. The one camp is of those who say that conventional morality, expediency, business principles, self-interest, are a sufficient basis for politics, commerce, and the relation of man to man. They distrust the enthusiasm of service and self-sacrifice and the idea of the Gospel as a foolish element. They bid the prophets prophesy not. The other camp is of those who say that in the social reformation that is coming upon us, the one safe guide is some deep religious truth that shall inspire to noble deeds—the claim that all are truly brothers in Christ—the faith that God rules the world and is transforming it into His kingdom.

"The first is the camp of the world; the second the camp of faith and the camp of God. You scarcely know yet to which you belong; but you are fitting yourself by your whole life for one or the other. . . ."

One of the old Hill boys, who knew the school in the early years of John Meigs' mastership, has written:

"The religious life of The Hill, if I am not mistaken, made its first start from its original formation of two Sunday attendances at church, when in my first year the Professor started a mid-weekly prayer meeting. Attendance was voluntary and most of us were shy about it. It was not until two years after I had left the school and came back to a commencement and stayed over for a day or two, that I ever came into an open communion of spirit with Professor on the higher things of human life—so stubborn was the boy's pride, but so gentle and tender of the boy's rights was the strong, humble man.

"The memory that comes quickest to mind shows the Professor sitting on the small platform in the old schoolroom, conducting the evening prayer service. The light of the oil lamp which he used to carry around with him at such imminent peril, fell on the strong kind face, and the beloved voice was the only sound to be heard as he read to us, most often, from Paul's epistles,—exhortations to 'stand fast in the faith; be strong: to forget the things which are behind and press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord: to think on whatsoever things are true, lovely, beautiful, of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise.' There are some of these phrases which to this day I can

never hear without instantly bringing up a vivid picture of the scene I have tried to describe. He never, or very seldom in those days, preached. Perhaps he was feeling his way, but I prefer to think it was his idea that the constant holding up of the old Apostle's manly gospel of right living and thinking would at last make its impression even on us careless youngsters. At any rate, he, himself, came very early in my knowledge of him to stand in my mind as the example of the Christian runner pressing towards the prize of the high calling, of the man who thought 'on these things' and in whose mind was no room for any base, vulgar or impure thoughts."

He could come sometimes into very close and confident relationship with boys whom he wanted to reach.

One writes:

"In the Spring of 1887 or 1888, Professor invited me to spend the night with him, and after a jolly half hour before the lights were turned out, he had, easily, naturally, and skillfully, prepared me for the two-hour heart-to-heart talk that followed. Stimulated and encouraged by his apparent interest in me, and feeling decidedly proud of the honor of being his roommate, he soon found out about all he desired to know, namely: plain, simple, unembellished statements that any boy would give concerning himself and others! causes that I thought produced failures, partial suc-

cess and progress, my natural desires for the unattained; ideas of future occupations to be tried; my opinion of the desirable, and annoying characteristics of classmates, teachers and friends, and what I considered were their best assets, and mine. Finally:—How and when did I think of Christ, and talk with Him? Did I *know* and *feel* that He wanted and thought of *me,* and longed to aid *me?* Did I feel and appreciate a growing and healthy confidence in my efforts, and the efforts of others, to co-operate with, and understand God, feel His influence, and understand His simple requests and wishes? Then, Professor's wonderful personality, and power to permanently plant in the boy mind and heart, the seed of his experience, during years of close association and co-operation with Christ, and the study of the Bible most impressively conveyed his thoughts and wishes, reasons and explanations, to a prepared and receptive mind, which would change any boy's viewpoint, error in judgment, and mental picture of a useful and valuable Christian life. His analysis of the boys at The Hill, always located their weakness! His advice and help nearly always corrected mistakes and shortcomings! never distorted any one, but improved every one.

"All who knew Professor could see that he expressed in life what he so beautifully expressed in words! And as I so often recall those two memorable nights, about twenty-five years ago, yet remembered as of yesterday, I seem to hear him add to that which I

have endeavored to quote:—'A *pure* life is usually much more helpful and desirable than a brilliant life.' 'Our character is our will, doubt and fear must be conquered if failure is to be avoided.' 'Constantly exercise the habit of praying, the prayer can be as easily heard when offered on a crowded city street, as it can in the quietest hour and place one can find.' 'Learn to think of Jesus as your devoted brother, teacher and friend, then you will be nearer to Him, and know Him better, when you think of Him, and see Him as King of kings."

As those who have been boys at The Hill have tried to sum up their memories of John Meigs, the one thing which most often and most impressively has been repeated is the memory of him as he used to be at prayers, and the message which,—all unconsciously, perhaps,—stole into the hearts of those who used to hear him then.

From among many letters have been drawn these paragraphs:

"First of all, I don't believe anyone could improve on that quotation from Robert Browning, as descriptive of Professor's fine, big, powerful, rugged and sympathetic character—'One who never turned his back . . .' The poem, backed by Professor's influence, serves as an inspiration, as it always suggests him so vividly: I love to think of Professor as standing up before us on Sunday

evenings after singing, and praying to God for all of us, with his fine judgment in picking out the better things in life for us, his voice touched with a sympathetic tremor as he touched upon the future lives of us all, for he must have seen how cruel the world can be at times, and the end of the prayer in which he asked the Lord to 'be with all the old fellows to-night wherever they may be.' I'll never forget that, never!"

"One thing I remember especially of those prayers in the schoolroom. It is the passage which again and again he used to read,—the passage ending with the 8th verse of the 4th chapter of the Philippians. I can shut my eyes and see and hear him now as he came in his reading to that last verse. All his earnestness seemed to dwell and linger on that word 'Finally,' as though he would sum up for us in what followed all that he was eager for us to believe and do. 'Finally'—he read,—'Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think* on *these* things.' It was on such things that *he* thought, and I think that even the most careless and unworthy of us knew that as we saw and heard him then."

But above all did the memory live of his prayers each night for the old boys.

Thus different ones have written:

"I always associated with him the way he *always* ended up his prayer in the schoolroom in the evenings with 'And bless all the old boys in the larger life beyond.' Those few words showed how big a man he was, for he was always thinking of others who moved in the various walks of life. So many schoolmasters forget that there is any kind of a world beyond their own. . . ."

"Many nights have I sat in a big chair at home recalling his strong face as he would be saying, 'And God bless the boys in this school, in college, and the larger life beyond,' and I knew he was speaking for me along with the other fellows."

"Long after I left the school I often remembered when way off in the hills that every night there was a prayer going up for me along with all the other old Hill boys, and it made me glad."

In the statue of Phillips Brooks by the side of Trinity Church in Boston, Saint Gaudens has tried to express the great truth of the mightier Presence which overshadowed and inspired the mighty preacher. Behind him, with hand stretched out, is the figure of the Christ.

Just back of the platform in the schoolroom at The Hill where John Meigs used to

pray among his boys, there hung a picture which to more than one thoughtful spirit must have conveyed the same suggestion which Saint Gaudens has put into his bronze. Behind John Meigs, too, the Master stood. It was the symbol of the truth. All that he did in the school he did as the servant of his remembered Lord.

To one of the boys he loved he wrote:

"I trust that the vacation has opened to you new and blessed assurances of your faith in Christ and of His power to aid. He bids you 'be strong, and fear not!' I pray for you daily. He is ever with you; only keep near Him and you are safe and victorious."

Back to The Hill, not infrequently, the boys who had gone out from the school would come to ask advice and guidance from the man they trusted and loved.

"I remember," says one, "the day dear Professor was ill in bed, and still saw me. Being naturally hesitant about intruding in his sick room, I was struck at once on coming into his presence by a feeling of being put at complete ease, because I could see by his remarkable expression that he saw my distress and suffered with me; then it was very easy to tell him all, and through my narrative I could see that he was a sympathetic listener

to my account. And then his big, beautiful heart opened up to me in, first, an atmosphere of strength and power which he always radiated, and then the advice came,—the advice from one in perfect accord with the Infinite, with all its sound judgment, its reassuring encouragement, and lastly this,—more powerful than all,—its irresistible appeal to follow the Right, to be at peace with God. I came out of his room with a peace and a determination that have never left me. I love to remember Professor's last words to me, the last time I saw him, as I left,—'God bless you, John.' It typifies in such a lovely manner his whole attitude towards life, and I cherish the words as being his final farewell to me."

And very beautiful is the story from another Hill boy who came back to a commencement two years after he had graduated, and then for the first time fully learned what The Master of The Hill could mean to the spirit of those who came close to him:

"One does not easily speak of the greatest moments of one's life, but surely one may be forgiven for laying a sincere if belated tribute at the feet of a holy man of God. The years have come and gone, a whole generation of men has passed, but I have that great moment to look back at when I stood with his arm

around my shoulder, on the little platform which used to be on the peak of the roof of the old building, watching the sun set over the far-away hills; and by some miracle I was able to forget myself and speak the things that are true and eternal if one sees them but once in a lifetime. And oh! the tenderness and the kindness of the dear Professor. Many, many years have come and gone since that great soul for a moment raised the small, timid soul of the boy into a sense of companionship. It would be grossly out of place to attempt to set down here the consequences. But surely it may be accepted as the tribute of the boy's reverence and not set down to the egoism of the boy, grown man, if I say that through all the wanderings of the years the light then kindled before my boyish eyes, though it has flickered, has never died; though it has been obscured, has never misled or played me false; though it has lighted for me a different path from his, yet it may shine at last upon the same goal.

"'Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself
And at the end of thy day,
Oh, faithful shepherd, to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.'"

CHAPTER VIII

THE LIFE WITHIN

John Meigs' Religious Nature—Likeness to Luther—Emphasis on Reality—His Championship of Freedom in the Briggs Trial —Power of Personal Sympathy—His Spirit as Revealed in His Intimate Letters—Death of Two of His Daughters and of His Mother—The Ministry of Sorrow.

IN the chapters which have preceded, we have thought of John Meigs as he shaped and molded the school. The time has come when, in an even more intimate and personal way, we must try to consider how there was shaped and molded meanwhile within him the Spirit which was his deepest self. Thus to seek to lift the veil that hangs before the all but incommunicable mystery of a human soul is a task which only reverent hands may touch; and even then, as the eyes of the would-be understanding look into that inmost shrine, they shall perceive only so much as they have been made wise enough to recognize and know. Yet from this attempt none will turn away who wish to gather the final message of that which makes this book a thing that should be written. What John Meigs did to build The Hill School and make it strong is of interest to all those who have

come into contact with his workmanship, and to those others too who realize in general the significance which a great school may have in the nation's life. But what John Meigs *was* in the aspirations and struggles of his soul draws the story of his life out of the circle of an intellectual meaning, and brings it into a living touch with that hunger of all human souls for fellowship with the greater spirits, who on that arena of life's realities where each must play his part, have fought the fight, endured their wounds, and won their victory at last.

As we said at the beginning, John Meigs' nature was made up of vivid elements. In every aspect, and very obviously, he was a man of strength,—strong in body, in mind, in will. He had the instinctive self-confidence of power, the formidableness of great energies driven by a determination which was unafraid. At the same time, he was intensely loving. When he set his hand to his work, he could do it with an unflinching, and if necessary, a lonely disregard of opposition; yet he depended for his happiness upon the love of those he loved. His own volcanic energies made him by instinct often impatient, and his own determination often stern; he was to learn the secret of a larger patience under the dominance of a yet higher and diviner love.

In many singularly suggestive ways, John Meigs was like one of the great figures of an earlier time. If one who knew Meigs looks at the pictures and studies the character of Martin Luther, he will be struck by a resemblance which grows the more interesting as it is pursued. There was a certain physical similarity, in the first place, between John Meigs and the likenesses which have come down to us of the great preacher and prophet of the Reformation. In both there were the heavy, deep-chested frame, the powerful head with its broad forehead and rugged features, the deep, unflinching eyes. They were alike, too, in impetuous emotion, and in the strength which could gather itself like a flaming thunderbolt against wrong no longer tolerable. They were alike in the curious blending of self-confidence and humility, of a power in action which seemed to need no support, and yet a hunger of the heart for affection which was as simple and ingenuous as a child's. They were alike in human daring, and most of all alike in their knowledge of the final truth that the highest human strength and courage can come only when the soul's insufficiency is linked to the greatness of God.

John Meigs' conception of religion was filled with a throbbing sense of its relationship to

life. The intense reality of his own spirit turned with an aversion sometimes scornful, sometimes sad, from the empty forms of an indifferent or merely esthetic worship; yet he was sympathetic with every manner of worship, whether or not instinctively congenial, in which he felt the soul of earnestness to stir. It will be remembered how in his letters from England in 1887, he expressed his profound appreciation of Farrar's preaching, and in the next breath his sense of the deadness and formality of the service he attended at Westminster Abbey. Other letters of his written at different times show his responsiveness to all religious appeals which were deep and true, and the amusement with which he regarded the prejudices of those who could see nothing good in any form of worship save their own:

"Jan. 22, 1882.

"Last evening I was invited to take tea at Mrs. A's and found a very pleasant circle of friends assembled there—all of whom were much my seniors—save the Dominie and his wife. However, this did not alter the measure of enjoyment that I had. There were the Episcopal Rector and his wife; Mrs. O, alleged to be the 'Mother of our Church' . . .; the D's who belonged to the Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, but whose interest in our Church is just as Christian and beautiful

as one could wish to see. Of course, we did little but talk—although I sang several songs —and I haven't had so thoroughly diverting a conversation for at least two months as we managed to become involved in last night. Mrs. O did get exercised over my occasional digs about her shocking orthodoxy, and in intense earnestness strove to warn me against letting the old landmarks go! You know how utterly devoid of any approach to form our service is; of late years we have stood during the last two hymns, and since Mr. Stevenson's installation we sing the Doxology at the opening, immediately after which the Pastor repeats the Lord's Prayer. Now many of our people have wished to have the congregation participate in this last act; Mrs. O—naturally —rises on her traditions and antediluvian associations—figuratively, at least, mounts the back of her pew, screams fire and shakes her umbrella in the face and eyes of the ritualistic party who wish to commit the impiety of repeating the Lord's Prayer in unison. I was amused beyond expression to observe her oracular deliverances on the 'fatal step' that she would resist to the day of her death. . . . Dear me! the form and method of the service are so immaterial to me; I believe I could stand anything from puritanism to episcopacy as florid . . . as rites could make it."

"Boston, January 1, 1882.

"I have just returned from a most solemn and delightful service at Trinity, Phillips

Brooks' church, . . . lasting from 11 o'clock until the beginning of the New Year. . . . The whole church was filled, and I shall long remember the awful silence which ensued after Mr. Brooks' words inviting the congregation to spend the last moments of the old year in unvoiced prayer for a holier power for God's service in the incoming year. He beautifully and cogently likened the New Year to the New Jerusalem, the chapter describing which he had read earlier in the hour, and the dear Father knows how my heart and soul poured out in loving prayer. . . .

"I escorted Mrs. F. . . . to hear Phillips Brooks this afternoon and sat near enough to catch every word and the varying shades of expression. It was a sermon I hope never to forget, based on our Saviour's characterization of the instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven—Matthew xiii : 52. The earnestness of the preacher's noble face is in itself an appeal to all that is pure and inspiring in one, the forceful exposition of the inspiration that comes from devotion to God's works and ways. An unusual and impressive feature of the service was the singing by the choir, unattended by the organ, of the invocation during the brief period of quiet prayer prior to the dispersion of the congregation. Never have the hidden things of God been more visible and real."

Of one of the Wednesday night voluntary prayer meetings which he used to hold with the boys, he wrote,—in 1883:

"It is now 9:30, and I have just finished reading the last word of 'Nathan' which the boys will wrestle with to-morrow; and before I go to bed I want to tell you how earnest and beautiful a meeting we had to-night. I conducted the services; we first sang two verses of 'Love Divine,' and then N. . . . led us in prayer. I then read Paul's passage on eating meat offered to idols, and on this both Mr. Roe and I spoke, I believe, impressively as never before. God grant that it be so! After our words, prayers were voluntarily made by many. We closed with one verse of 'Just As I Am.' About twenty-five were present and there were some very earnest faces among them."

From other letters come these paragraphs:

"I have great and peculiar need of being 'instant in prayer' and in my work and my responsibilities; unless the Lord direct all will be amiss. Oh, pray with, and for me, that I may be quickened and chastened by the Lord's mighty hand.

"H. . . . seems most happy, as well he may, for 'his joy no man taketh from him.' It is inspiring and discouraging to see a man so full of triumphant, exultant peace.

"What riches for you to come back to! God grant that the good work he is doing may be established in the hearts and lives of each one of these boys and of us all."

"Dec. 27, 1885.

"It is ten o'clock, but I cannot rest before telling you of the wonderful sermon I have heard to-day from Phillips Brooks. This morning he preached from Acts vii : 59 and it was the grandest sermon I ever heard. The keynote of its inspiring tones was the ultimate power of a simple living Christianity. He traced Paul's relation to what he witnessed at Stephen's death, and bade every soul that doubted its aptitude for great things for Christ to be only willing to be small that Christ might be great in it or through it. His appeal to the young men of Boston to choose Christ, his full heart and blazing eye as he told of Him and His love I shall never forget. I fairly quivered through the sermon and felt as if I must sob, so deeply was I stirred by this wonderful preacher of the wonderful truth."

"January 24, 1893.

"I do not know when I have had such a shock as Phillips Brooks' death caused me. Almost the last words you spoke yesterday at the station were—'Now, I must hear Phillips Brooks!' It is a mystery, and yet not a mystery that such a man should be taken. His life surely was complete; but the incompleteness of so many lives that drew vitality from his almost causes one to cry out in sorrow at his removal. How glorious his death was—a translation in very truth!"

Perhaps the most interesting single event in John Meigs' life so far as concerns its reve-

lation of his religious beliefs and essential loyalties, was his connection with the famous heresy trial of Dr. Charles Augustus Briggs. Dr. Briggs, then a professor in Union Seminary, New York, was assailed by the conservative party in the Presbyterian Church because of certain writings of his which espoused those newer ideas as to the Bible which the bolder scholarship of the time was making familiar. The beliefs which he advanced concerning the authorship and the manner of composition of some of the Old Testament books, particularly, were those which most thoughtful men in the churches have long since recognized to be true, but at the time when Dr. Briggs advanced them, they threw many ecclesiastical leaders into amazed and indignant consternation. A great cry went up that Dr. Briggs was assailing the inspiration of the Scriptures. The attack against him was waged with all the intensity of which a conscientious intellectual reaction can be capable, until he was finally arraigned for trial before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Briggs himself was a man of that aggressive temper which does not help promote the peace, but he stood in this instance as the champion of a cause far greater than himself. In the keeping of the side which he represented rested the fate of

that liberty of investigation which believes that the reverent study of the Word of God must be hampered by no prohibitions of stereotyped opinion, and that the study which may compel the recasting of long-accepted theories about this and that aspect of the Bible, if it has been based on a true and honest method, will lead not to uncertainty, but to larger and serener faith. On the other hand, stood many men who sincerely believed that the pronouncements so new and strange to them must be fraught with danger to the old beliefs they knew and loved; and in part their attitude reflected unconsciously the traditionalism which in so many ages has tried to crush with its brand of heresy the new aspect of truth for which it cannot find room in the pigeon-holes of those ideas which it believes to be orthodox and final. Sincere men, and men of conviction, there were, of course, among the prosecutors of Briggs, but the sincerity of some of them was of that same grim character which has made Inquisitors under many garbs and in many generations. Progress and the fearlessness of a larger faith waited upon the triumph of that tendency which Dr. Briggs for a moment represented; and though, as it happened, he was formally condemned, the cause he stood

for—as often happens, too,—moved on to its destined victory.

For a number of years, John Meigs' essential sympathies and his activity in his own church had prepared him to be one of those who should rally to the banners of the principles which Dr. Briggs defended. In his boyhood, he attended the Pottstown Presbyterian Church, where for many years his mother sang in the choir. When he came from Lafayette to become headmaster in 1876, he took from the outset a prominent part in the church's work, beginning by singing in the choir. Later he was elected a trustee, and on December 8th, 1889, he notes:

"On Wednesday evening after prayer meeting, the heads of the church elect at least two more elders and I have been requested to allow the use of my name. I shrink from it for many reasons, beside my sense of unfitness, and I am in a real quandary as to what to do. Pray that I may have guidance and grace to decide wisely."

For a number of years, until the school grew so large that he established services on The Hill, he took the boys to the Pottstown Church twice each Sunday. Because of that, he felt a special responsibility to make the spirit and teachings of the Church such as would appeal to straightforward and inquiring

minds. When, soon after he came to The Hill, the pulpit became vacant, he used his earnest influence to find and call a minister who should represent what was fearless and forward-looking, as well as what was reverent, in Christian thought. Such a man, in the Reverend Henry M. Dyckman, he found, and he stood back of all his work to the utmost of his power.

In 1893 he was elected a member of the General Assembly, before which the Briggs case was to come. Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, of Brooklyn (afterwards president of Union Seminary), wrote him this letter, in which the real satisfaction shines through its affectionate raillery:

"No. 128 Henry St.,
Brooklyn,
17 May, 1893.

"Dear Friend:

"I rejoice that your Presbytery, in an evil hour, fell under the temptation of the adversary, and sent you to the Assembly. May you do much harm!

"I send this line to Brown, who will give you a hearty greeting, and will introduce you to Dr. Briggs if you do not already know him.

"May the blessing of the sons of Belial rest upon you and upon your children to the third and fourth generation!

"Yours for preterition,
C. C. H."

"Elder Meigs
from Pennsylvania!"

Then from Washington, where the Assembly met, his letters to his wife take up the graphic story of the trial. Very positive and partisan in their expressions they will be seen to be, and full of the intensity which was characteristic of all his convictions. Some might even question the wisdom of publishing that which is so vividly reminiscent of old controversy; yet those who knew John Meigs will not forget that underneath his outspoken and militant opinions dwelt that deep and humble Christian sympathy which always made him recognize his ultimate fellowship with all who were seeking to serve with their best light the Church and the Church's Lord.

"Washington, May 20, 1893.

"To my surprise and almost pain when the Moderator announced the committees yesterday morning, I found myself on the Judicial Committee next to three distinguished lawyers; the second committee in importance generally,—the first this year because before it comes, or has come, the first consideration of the Briggs case. Nothing could have been more unexpected except my original election to the Assembly, and without personal acquaintance to bring me under the eye or mind of the Moderator I am designated for this supreme committee, in this fateful year of our Church. May the Christ of

peace and love fill my soul with His spirit aright to serve Him who gave Himself for me!

"We had our first meeting last night and heard the appeal in full from the New York Presbytery prosecuting committee, who were defeated in the Presbytery in January, as you may recall. Never was there a worse cause worse presented than the anti-Briggs presentment by this prosecuting committee. No action was taken last night beyond filing the appeal in order, *pro forma.* This morning we meet to consider what recommendations we shall make to the General Assembly. Here will come the agony, for, of course, the majority of our committee is anti-Briggs, or anti-liberal as I prefer to put it. There will undoubtedly be a majority for a strong resolution unfavorable to freedom; there will undoubtedly be a strong (in quality and spirit, I hope) minority report, appealing either for regularity of procedure, a hearing by the New York Synod which has been . . . ignored by the appellants, or for a dismissal of the appeal, the ending of the contention and acrimony of the whole case and the advocacy of peace and work. This last, the dismissal of the appeal, would best suit my views, but I fear it is impracticable. There seems to be a fair fighting chance for the return to the New York Synod. I shall work and vote in concert with the lovers of liberty and peace, and suffer in the passing regard of the large majority who seem ready for any intolerant and crushing issuance of this ever-

recurring question of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

"I am seeing numerous old college acquaintances and find the gathering on this side most interesting.

"Mrs. M. . . . has turned up and seems very glad to see me, though (dear soul!) after the Judicial Committee makes its report, she will probably want to cross the street to escape me!

"I have just come in from a long conference with the Liberals and am actively engaged in trying to bring our committee minority of six, to common ground to-morrow morning when the majority will propose resolutions that pre-judge the great case and prejudice the defendant's interest. . . . Briggs' opponents are so fierce that they will not consent to the regular order, but wish to depose him in a summary and premature way. You can imagine how intense the feeling is. The pressure on the Judicial Committee is, and will be, frightful until we report to the Assembly. I am unutterably sorry and yet glad that I am in this place of peculiar responsibility and gravity. God help me to speak and act in His spirit of liberty and love. How true that tolerance of the intolerant is the hardest kind of tolerance to attain! Pray for my guidance and my help!

"I am brought into close relations with the rarest spirits of this great gathering, and this is a privilege dear to my soul. Social pleasures are a thing of the past or future. I have no soul for them now, and yet I feel the in-

adequacy of my powers—impaired as they certainly have been by my illness.

"I ran up home for a night, and finding things running smoothly returned this P. M. in order to be here in time for our early morning committee meeting."

On the back of the letter from Dr. Hall is written in pencil this memorandum: "Minority of Judicial Committee called to order by election of Dr. Nicholls as Chairman, J. Meigs as Secretary. By vote of meeting Dr. Nicholls was requested to draw up report setting forth the opinion of the minority."

Then the letters continue:

"May 22, '93.

"Our Judicial Committee will divide in reporting the result of their conference. Fifteen will support the majority, and six of us the minority report; the latter is the specific and constitutional recommendation, the former is summary and intolerant. I am relieved unutterably to have the committee stage of the question ended; for, for the first time I can begin to breathe freely and prepare my spirit for the strain of the next few days of trial.

"To-morrow the committee's reports will be heard and then the battle will be on. Of course, the Briggs side is very much the weaker numerically, but the quality is good enough for me. To-night the Briggs group

have a conference at our hotel, and I am to be with them in this supreme and final council."

"May 24.

"At last the main work of our committee is done and the majority and minority reports have brought the great judicial case before the Assembly. Yesterday afternoon the reports were brought in and read to the General Assembly amid silence. The majority has gone outside of the constitution in their eagerness to punish Dr. Briggs, and our minority report was adopted, not formally or openly, but, inferentially by the course that the Moderator, under counsel, laid out for the case. The reading of the appeal, a clerical exercise that tried the patience of a gathering boiling with agitation, aside from the smothering heat of the church, was the only step taken after the report was heard. This afternoon at half-past two, the case comes on with precedence over all the other business until it is out of the way. The sentiment is divided as to the hearing of the case by the Assembly and reference to the Synod. The latter I prefer, as do the liberals, generally, and some of the moderate conservatives.

"I have been appointed by the liberals one of a 'steering committee' of seven to arrange and apportion the work on the floor of the Assembly or elsewhere, so that my hands are full and my head and heart as well. I can scarcely believe that I am myself; I may feel this the more after the trial when the liberals

are put under the ban, if this be, as it is likely to be, the natural course of events.

"Last evening I accepted an invitation to dine at the H. . . .'s, and had a lovely, quiet, domestic evening—a sharp contrast to my other evenings here, and it brought me to bedtime in a serene spirit."

"May 25, 1893.

"You can hardly realize the tension I have been, and am, under. All of one's thoughts and energies are enlisted in this great question and I am daily surprised to find one and another of the consecrated, influential personalities, men and women, eagerly, prayerfully, hoping for liberty's triumph. It may be delayed, but it is as sure as God, despite the temporary obstacles that oppose it. Dr. Briggs spoke an hour and a half yesterday P. M. and will have three and one-half more hours allowed him on the propriety of the prosecuting committee's appeal. Then the latter will reply, and then comes the first great struggle on the floor of the Assembly. The conservatives, by whom I mean the great body of Dr. Briggs' opponents, are disposed, not to say determined, not to allow free discussion and debate; they would actually like to settle the question over night. This Judicial Committee experience has been a despiritualizing ordeal for me. The combination of prayers for peace, for the spirit that is 'first pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy,' and the deliber-

ate utterance of a purpose to wage war, bitter, relentless and to the knife, is enough to sicken one's soul.

"As the General Assembly has now entered on the Briggs case, all else is suspended and we must sit steadily without leave of absence for an hour even, until the whole issuance is made. God help us to show His spirit in these trying days."

"May 26.

"I have just come in from a long, tense agony in the Assembly, incident to the discussion of the question as to whether we shall try Dr. Briggs or send the case down to the Synod, the intermediate court. God help them and his Christ-bought Church! In an hour and a half after the discussion begins we take the first great vote and this virtually decides the case. Oh, that in this our hearts and consciences could be illuminated by Christ's own spirit of love and peace! But I fear the motives are not all God-given. However it goes, and it seems now as if it could go only one way, we who profess the liberal spirit must show the spirit of Him who, when He was reviled, reviled not again."

On this same day he wrote to a friend:

"Here I am, and have been for more than a week, sitting as Commissioner in the General Assembly . . . at this great crisis. I have had frightful work to do and warfare to wage in the Judicial Committee. . . . Six out of twenty-one finally refused to bow the

knee to Baal and brought in our minority report which blazes the way to liberty and righteousness. The atmospheric pressure against us has been terrific, but our strength has increased daily. And though we go to certain defeat to-day we are in the path of ultimate victory.

"I have come into the closest relation with Dr. Briggs and his intimate friends, and best of all, with a noble group of men who are here in the interest of no personality but that of our Lord and His Christ."

"May 28.

"We are nearly all hoping that Dr. Briggs will continue his case to the end, though last night one of the Union Seminary directors told me he thought there would be no use in it. They are rampant, he says, to slaughter him and will have no regard for what he says on the merits of the case which now formally comes up for trial. I don't wonder at Dr. Briggs' own disinclination to make a plea before so hostile and inflexible a body of so-called judges. And yet for the sake of the principles embodied in his position, I hope he will have the Assembly go on record on this question."

"May 29.

"Dr. Briggs, following the prosecuting committee, has begun his defense this afternoon. This argument covers the question of his heresy, and is, of course, the vital one. There is no disposition among the majority

to listen to argument, however. . . . I realize that Dr. Briggs is not the ideal defender of the faith, so far as that gentleness and winsomeness that were in Christ are concerned, but he has been so hounded by these malignant enemies who misrepresent him, in season and out of season, that I am not surprised, though I am disappointed somewhat by his strong utterances. It has been his personality rather than his view throughout that has aroused the relentless antagonisms that now are fast ripening for his downthrow. However, if your own categorical asservations before God should be hooted or sneered at by unfriendly judges, you would find it hard to preserve a mild and serene behavior, and I sometimes wonder, not at his vehemence so much, as at his restraint."

"May 30.

"The great case has been presented by the parties; at 7:45 to-night the members of the New York Presbytery will be heard. To-morrow at 9:30 members of the Assembly will begin to be heard for two hours; at 11:30 the first of thirty-one votes will be taken on sustaining the appeal of the prosecuting committee; aye, means Briggs' condemnation; no, his justification. It is needless to say he will be condemned, despite his utterances of argument and belief. The majority have one chance to rescue themselves from their medieval posture, and this is the mitigation of the sentence. If they are as intolerant in this as they have been in the other proceedings,

God help the Church. I cannot believe that they will rush madly to extremes in this matter.

"To convict Briggs the Assembly ought to alter the indictment from heresy to lying, if they are really anxious to be consistent. It looks now as if we should get away to-morrow, Wednesday night. I sincerely hope so, for my absence at this time is a great strain for me, and yet I shall ever bless God that I came at this critical juncture of the Church."

"June 1st.

"'The court' has been in a most continuous and tense session for the past two days. I begin to feel ready for a rest-cure of any description, and shall doubtless find in my diverse occupations at home a real solace from these novel and distressing responsibilities that have rested on me.

"The verdict, as you have anticipated, is suspension from the ministry and Dr. Briggs is no longer a Presbyterian clergyman. This will not necessarily affect his relation to Union Theological Seminary, and he will doubtless continue to teach as long as he lives. The majority has assumed a great responsibility and will have the future, if not the present, thought of the Church of Christ against it."

The immediate issues which gave these letters their intensity and fire pass away, but from them there comes an abiding impression

of the men who wrote them—a sense of the earnestness of his religious loyalties, as well as of the force of his championship for freedom.

But a still deeper development in his religious consciousness than these letters alone can show had been going on for a decade in his spirit.

When he first began his work at The Hill his religion consisted essentially of a sturdy devotion to right and duty, under the sanction of the thought of God. As a Christian, too, he looked to Jesus Christ as the incarnation of those ideals which he himself wished to try to follow, and gave himself with earnest heart to His service. But in his own thought there was still something greatly lacking. He became the more conscious of this after his marriage and his association with the radiant spirit of his wife. He said once sadly that though he was trying as well as he could to follow the Master, he did not have the feeling—as he knew some had—that God in Christ was a real and living Presence to whom he could turn in conscious and immediate communion.

None can describe the way in which this sense of the living God comes to the human hearts that know it. Still it lies beyond the reach of words, wrapped in that "mystery

which hath been hid from ages and from generations . . ., which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." But through the doors of manifold experiences, sometimes from the sunlight and sometimes from the shadow, it does come—self-revealing, sufficient. And to John Meigs too, it was to come, out of the door of love and over the threshold of sorrow.

If we should know his spirit fully, it would be necessary to know all that came to him of inspiration, of spiritual recognition, made more exquisite and tender through his marriage. But the story of that cannot be told.

Yet we can trace the influence upon him of some of the rich friendships which he acknowledged with the unrestrained outpouring of his lavish affection. The Drown family and the family of Dr. Rossiter W. Raymond, both of whom he met first when he was at Lafayette, meant pre-eminently much to him.

In 1881 he writes, referring to the Drowns:

"T. . . . says he has a whole week's talk laid out and I am essential to the entire arrangement, so I shall go directly to Easton on Thursday, after the boys leave and stay until Monday after Christmas, deferring the rest of that ominous conversation for a month or two. I shall be glad to get into the household that has been so faithful and unswerving in their devotion for so many years. I

want just such friends now and thank God fervently that their love is such as to induce them to desire my presence. It's all a great mystery to me, but life is so permeated with marvels that I simply feel thankful and try to be worthy of such love and leave the rest with God."

Again he writes of a visit to the same family:

"Jan. 30, 1882.

"I never felt so grateful to God for His gracious favor in allowing me during the past six years to give the very best of which I have been capable to the hearts and lives of these loved ones, whose blessing has been the sweetest compensation God could render for my faltering service. . . ."

Best of all is the correspondence through many years with Mrs. Rossiter W. Raymond, for whom John Meigs felt an altogether peculiar love, and whom he used to call "Aunt Sally." From among many letters these paragraphs are taken.

John Meigs to Mrs. Raymond, written from on shipboard as he returned from Europe in 1887:

"My beloved Aunt Sally:

"Here I am only eighteen hours—thank God—from New York!

"The days immediately following the close of school were thronged to the degree of distraction with innumerable cares from which the intervening weeks have hardly released me. . . ." [*Then, after recounting the experiences of the journey, he goes on:*] "If I am to be really a 'changed man' that change will have to be worked out in the bosom of my family or amid my dearest friends; Europe, Asia and Africa are as dust in the balance alongside of 'Durham Woods' or 'The Hill.' . . . My heart is full and running over with joy as the staunch ship measures her sixteen knots an hour, and one, dearest Aunty, of the most precious hopes I cherish is that of seeing you and the dear ones with you ere long.

"Ever faithfully yours,

"John Meigs."

From John Meigs to Mrs. Raymond, two weeks later:

"My beloved Aunt Sally:

"Your letter of the 16th has just reached me.

"I am covered with shame, as with a garment, to think that so gracious and dearly-prized a gift as E. . . .'s beautiful picture should be so long unacknowledged.

"There is no sufficient apology for this; but my head has been swimming, day and night, because of the unpardonable neglect of mechanics who had promised to complete necessary changes early in July, and yet left

the commencement of these until within a day or two of my return.

"I have simply had to drive them, day and evening, trying, almost vainly, to make ready for the boys who are coming down upon us in royal style and spirit on the too-near 27th and 28th.

"The almost dizzying distraction involved has left me hardly time to sit down; telegrams by telephone have been my principal form of communication, and I am still more inexcusable because I haven't adopted this method in more cases.

"You will forgive me, my dearest of Aunties, and know that I appreciate more than I can tell you the lovely picture . . . and the blessed letters that you and A. . . . wrote me on the 31st [*his birthday*].

"To have received such a letter as yours was to have an added inspiration for every hour of life, . . . fraught with associations of the holiest and most joyous ties that have *fixed* my life here and hereafter.

"I need not, indeed I cannot, tell you all that I ever have from you and your beloved circle. Whatever of faint suggestion of usefulness or fruitfulness I aspire to or may feebly attain I refer gratefully and constantly, before God, to you. Oh, dear Aunt Sally, but for the uplifting hand of God your head even now would bow with the very burden of the crowns which the souls of those you have drawn to Him would lay lightly and reverently upon that dear brow, that I, and my beloved Marion, long again to see! You are

ever in our thoughts; you are, more largely than you believe, the thought in us, with Christ over and in and above all. . . .

"Ever faithfully,

"John."

To John Meigs from Mrs. Raymond, written in 1907, while Mrs. Raymond was on a visit at The Hill, and he was away:

"April 25, 1907.

"Dearest of all Johns:

"Here I am yet, though I purpose to be well enough to start with dear E. . . . tomorrow for Brooklyn." [*Then after telling many details about the household at The Hill, and of her fellowship with Mrs. Meigs, she continues:*]

"I do love her, John, and I always did, from the first hour of our acquaintance, and now more than ever. And I need not, though I *will,* tell you again how I can say the same, most sincerely, of you; and this increasing, intensifying interest and affection is to me the most wonderful and satisfying proof of immortality. With all we read, and talk about in regard to the other life, this lovely, happy, deepening and heightening and enlarging love for our friends is the one factor of assurance I need, from the earthly standpoint. It is to me the complement to the Saviour's declaration, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'

"Aren't you glad that we first met so long

ago? For not only we, but so many of the beloved in both circles have been drawn into the same blessed circumference that we are unusually blest in the contemplation of reunion! . . .

"I send you my dearest old-timey-est love; and when you give of the same commodity [without the adjective!] to J. . . ., to M. . . . and to little S. . . ., don't dole it out, but give largesse.

"Your affectionate,

"Aunt Sally."

From Mrs. Raymond to John Meigs in 1908.

"How many years is it, dear John (dearest of Johns, in fact!) since you first came to Durham Wood to spend your birthday . . .? I cannot think back and get dates to my satisfaction; but ah! I can get all my old fond associations back in a moment, when I put my mind to work on my memory!

"And as far as my loving heart can go, it might be only a very few years, and it might be ages. For always long ago, and always in eternity, those beautifully happy days will be radiant; and as permanent in memory as fixed stars are in the heavens. How little we thought in those jolly times that we were heaping up treasures which should become *holy!* But so it is—with me at any rate; and so it is with you too, I doubt not, faithful friend!"

And again in 1910:

"August 30.

"And how many times have I written that date, dear John, and how many times did you spend your birthday with us, needing no letter?

"Ah, how kind God has been to us, to fill our lives with memories; some merry, and some sad, but all of them sacred! . . ."

From John Meigs to Mrs. Raymond:

"My best beloved Aunty:

"Your oldest 'boy' feels, after the blessed Sunday he had with you dear, dear friends, as if he were ready to say, *Nunc Dimittis*. . . .

"I cannot, and therefore shall not try to tell how Heaven itself helped to people that dear hill top with its most blessed presences; and if ever my soul aspired and rejoiced it was during those brief but radiant hours with you and yours—and ours, of earth and Heaven alike.

"Oh, if I could utter, as I cannot, the glad burden of my gratitude and love to you, dearest of earthly friends, and yours, every one,—perhaps even your full heart that must know somewhat of the streams that have issued therefrom to make glad the City of God, below, might feel a keener joy. . . .

"I was in the spirit in Durham much of the time and yet in Washington, too, for the

soul's home is in the souls that have given it its new birth, as you have really, mine; and I go hurrying back to my Beloved and your Beloved too, to tell her of new and deep experiences that find their power and sweetness in this latest fellowship which it has been my rich blessing to enjoy. . . .

"Devotedly,

"John."

In the less intimate and established friendships, also, John Meigs' spirit of service was able to give and to receive much. Here, for example, are two incidents which are mentioned in his letters to his wife:

Writing of the illness of a young girl in whom he was greatly interested, he says:

"She is sick in mind and I simply could not restrain my tears as I rode along home thinking of what I should do or try to do if one of our own children were thus stricken; and it somehow helped me to understand better the heart of God as He sees His sin-sick children and must suffer to be really our heavenly Father. We must pray for the dear child and cheer the sorrow-laden parents and learn the ever clearer lesson of forgiveness and love in judging others."

And again, with reference to another friend:

"To-night I attended prayer meeting during which I sat near enough to E. . . . to

discover her manifest depression and agitation. After meeting I joined her and walked with her to her gate. A casual word, intimating some special trouble, the nature of which I easily divined, led me to go into the house, where I had a talk with her upon her engagement. It turns out that for a week past she has been in utter misery, doubting the right course to pursue, as the reputation of her lover had come to her corroborated by conclusive facts as to his character. The poor girl really has had no disinterested counsel that had laid hold upon her heart and head alike, and I was bold enough to be utterly frank with her as to the considerations that could be educed on every side of the question that occurred to me. She has decided to write him and break off her engagement. Her spirit and manner were sweet, womanly and grateful beyond expression. I feel unutterably thankful that I went to service tonight. So it is, and must ever be: the apparently incidental experiences of life are what make or mar our own and other lives."

If his letters to his friends are revealing of that inward ministry to his spirit which love wrought, so also in an even tenderer way are his letters to his children.

Through them runs a vein of playful humor, as for instance in these paragraphs taken from different letters to his daughters at school and abroad:

"When we reach the school, we shall observe all the rules and not make you blush by talking about your charms to the girls or even to the teachers. 'I embrace you!' as Napoleon used to say in his letters to his various wives, particularly when he was about to take another.

"You quite 'stump' me when you ask about the fool questions parents of new boys ask, and yet I should know a little about what they say.

"A very frequent statement is: Johnnie has so lovely a disposition, has never told a lie, and is so unselfish—but he must have a southern exposure for his room, and his health is *so* important that he really ought to have a larger room than a mere ordinary boy: and he is so sensitive about his food, really can't enjoy broiled sweetbreads more than twice a day, nor sweets more than three times a day. He has a very rare mind—so rare that you cannot discern it, except under a magnifying glass. His less amiable qualities he inherits straight from his father's side of the house; his good looks from mine. . . ."

"Your letter of Friday reached me this morning, and I was greatly charmed by its marked improvement in penmanship and general style.

"If you keep up this tone, you'll soon find yourself unable to drop back into the old paralyzed, hen-tracks, negligee style of yore."

"I'm trying to be good and get out in the air in the automobile every day. It looks

like new, and Frank seems to have a new coat of varnish put on his manners."

"A. . . . has appeared in a new Spring creation in the shape of anything else than a hat, though she wears it chiefly on her head. It is much milder than most of the hats I see, and as she threatens to take it with her to Europe, you'll see how chaste and simple it is."

"We have had our usual early days' experiences with home-sick and book-sick lads.

"The weather has been superb for a week, and that has helped matters greatly. Your room and 'Gran's' have been occupied by boys for several days—sad profanation, indeed, and their antics over the east end of my study reminded me frequently that my dignified mother-in-law doesn't vault over beds and try 'drop-kicking' between bells for meals."

But underneath the sparkle of this playfulness, like the tide setting in from the sea, surge the great deeps of his lavishly expressed devotion.

Thus he writes to one of his daughters:

"My darling:

"No day in Father's calendar is bigger with joy and gratitude than October 25th, and you need no word of mine to tell you why.

"You have gone singing and ringing

through your, now, twenty beautiful years, gladdening all hearts and none more than your Daddy's.

"It would be strange, indeed, if with two such eventful days as the 23d and 25th so near me, I were not counting my mercies and recognizing God's goodness to me to a degree far exceeding my deserts.

"May He keep you ever as His own Angel of tender love and ministrations to those who need you, Dearest!"

And again:

"What can I say that is not full of the old familiar blessed love that has filled my heart to overflowing for you, my sweet comrade, during all your days and especially during these last two years of my halting life when we have been thrown together in a peculiar way. I cannot write a steamer letter to you, for you know my heart's inmost thought and love, already; and, God willing, we shall soon again take up the blessed, familiar fellowship on the other side, where in the meantime our hearts will really be.

"You will help and bless all you know by your loving spirit. God keep you and enrich you by the deepening sense of His dear presence."

"Well, K. . . . won't be a hundredth part as glad to see you as the old white-haired fellow I saw in the looking-glass a little while ago."

But though to his heart the ministry of the living was so deep and beautiful, the ministry of the dead had been more transforming still.

His eldest child was Edith, born February 25, 1883.

In May of 1890, Edith fell ill with diphtheria. In a few days the disease—more terrible and deadly then than now—ran its course. On Saturday, near midnight, on the 10th of May, she died.

That which was perhaps the greatest crisis in the growth of John Meigs' soul had come.

Early on the next morning he came into his own room from the room next door where lay the body of his beloved dead.

From the windows high up over The Hill, he stood looking out as the morning broke. Out across the trees he gazed, over the sleeping town to the river and the still spaces of the farther hills and to the lightening sky. The breath of the day's awakening stirred through the tops of the trees. That exquisite and poignant loveliness of the morning, full of its quivering suggestion of the infinite and haunting beauty which lies beyond the frame of the things we see, was lightening across the world.

Yet other things, too, cut across it. The rattle of early wheels in the streets, the smoke going up from the distant furnaces, the con-

fused but growing sound of the preparations for the day, came up like a kind of inexorable reminder of the harsh facts of life, which seem so indifferent to the heart's longing and the heart's pain.

One deep human cry broke from him—"Oh, if I could only see her once more and know that she is alive, I could let her go!"

Then to him in that moment of his bitter sorrow came the reminder of the words which long ago the Master said to Thomas: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

He looked out again into the morning. The day had come.

Well has it been said, "We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial." In that day the sunlight went round the face of the dial but once, but for the soul of John Meigs it was as though the days of all a ripening harvest-time had dawned and passed and left their fruit. He found for himself, that which he had longed for—even in the Valley of the Shadow, the conscious presence of the living God.

At the funeral the much-loved friend, Dr. Rossiter W. Raymond, conducted the services. And these verses which he wrote expressed not only the message of an ideal, but

that which came true for John Meigs that day.

"'Beside the dead I knelt for prayer,
And felt a presence as I prayed.
Lo! It was Jesus standing there.
He smiled: 'Be not afraid!'

"'Lord, Thou hast conquered death we know;
Restore again to life,' I said,
'This one who died an hour ago.'
He smiled: 'She is not dead!'

"'Asleep then, as thyself didst say;
Yet thou canst lift the lids that keep
Her prisoned eyes from ours away!'
He smiled: 'She does not sleep!'

"'Nay, then tho' haply she do wake,
And look upon some fairer dawn,
Restore her to our hearts that ache!'
He smiled: 'She is not gone!'

"'Alas! too well we know our loss,
Nor hope again our joy to touch,
Until the stream of death we cross.'
He smiled: 'There is no such!'

"'Yet our beloved seemed so far,
The while we yearn to feel them near,
Albeit with Thee we trust they are.'
He smiled: 'And I am here!'

"'Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and Thee,
Nor sleep, nor wander far away?'
He smiled: 'Abide in Me.'"

The following Wednesday night, the prayer meeting for the boys came at its usual hour. Ordinarily the boys themselves had a large part of its conduct. This night, John Meigs went as he always did, but he asked that the whole time might be given to him. Then out of the sacred deeps of his own experience he brought to the boys the message which love and pain had brought to him. He tried to help them understand that night that by faithfulness and obedience through the common days they must learn to make Christ real to their own thought and will if they would find Him near in the moments of their some-time need.

It was at this time that he began at the evening prayers in the schoolroom to use a phrase which became dearly familiar to those who listened to him as the years went on: "We thank Thee, Lord, for what Thou hast given, for what Thou hast withheld, for what Thou hast taken away."

Among the copies of his letters in 1892, is this one to one of the old boys who had lost his sister:

"There is something sad, and much more unutterably beautiful, in the thought of her transition from earth to heaven at this Easter season. There will be to you and the other boys a new impulse and influence heaven-

ward. The eternal joys upon which she has entered will become more real to you now, as Mrs. John and I have learned through such affliction to count the sorrow little in the face of the infinite blessings that now attend our dear ones who have faded from our physical sight, but who are more dear and more influential in our lives because of their physical withdrawal. At such a time there is no possible help or comfort in any other than Christ. One may say what he will, it is the Christ who has taken from death its sting and from the grave its victory. He is the Ever-Present, Ever-Loving Friend, and to Him, we tenderly commend you. . . . God help you and comfort you, as He alone can. Be assured that our hearts go out to you here in tender sympathy, for we, too, have suffered the loss of our first-born, and God knows how truly we can enter into the sorrows of other hearts; and yet our sorrow has been changed into joy. May this be . . . your own portion!

"I send a few copies of the little memorial 'Edith,' which may be blessed to the comfort of you all."

In letters to his wife in the days and years after Edith's death he wrote:

"December 27, 1890.

"I have no desire for the old-time lavish exchange of gifts. Love is best; and what God gives us must be passed on to needier souls than even we. When I read of what Christmas has denied others, I feel self-re-

proached to think that I have received a penny's worth.

"January 1, 1891.

"God only knows what the New Year holds for us of trial, it may be of sorrow; we know that all things work together for good, and are ready to follow where He leads, for it can only be towards light and love, final and triumphant. As I recount our experiences of the past year I thank God that faith, not sight, is the order of our life. How hearts would fail and courage die, if we knew what a day would bring forth! No year of my life has been so rich and fruitful as this old year, 1890. It has been a period of travail of soul but of no darkness. God has not veiled His face and His word has been sure. I travel to the setting sun with the sweetest joy and peace in my heart that I have ever known. I cannot tell you the infinitude of content and gratitude that floods my soul.

"May 10, 1893.

"The day that signalizes our deepest experience of the sufficiency of Christ's sustaining love has come once more. It were better not to think how different life would be to us as we think how different it would be to our first-born darling had the Master not called her to share His veriest life. God make and keep us worthier of her and Him, day by day!

"May 11, 1895.

"I found on my return that the children had been invited to go to Ringing Rocks for

an afternoon picnic and I thought that the joyous life they would throw into this outing would quite fit the real spirit of the fifth anniversary of our precious Edith's entrance upon the life eternal; so I went alone to the cemetery and cleaned up the ivy and saw that all was well with the resting place of the dear body that enshrined our darling's pure soul.

"May 12, 1898.

"I was so moved yesterday to recall eight years ago that Sabbath morning when to the sacred sorrow of those early hours, dear old Ros brought his great loving heart of comfort and strength. Strange and divine mystery —how it has deepened and sweetened all our life, for through it we have entered so many other lives which had been else closed to us and we had gone on our own narrow way!"

In the year after that letter was written, while Mrs. Meigs was absent on a visit, he had these words of Browning's painted over the window in their room, "Love is all and death is naught."

"For through it we have entered so many other lives which had else been closed to us," he wrote of his sorrow; and as though they were a commentary upon that, stand these words of one of the masters at The Hill:

"He had a flood of sympathy, at times approaching a woman's tenderness, for one

in real distress. At the time of my wife's death, the first big sorrow of my life, I was shaken to the very depths of my nature by an almost uncontrollable grief. In the very darkest hour he came, enveloped me in his arms and by such a strong, genuine outburst of love, sympathy and sorrow, intermingled by words of hope and faith, he seemed to breathe into me his very life. I mention this most sacred memory only as an illustration of the way in which he gave his life and love and hope to his very dying day."

Among some memoranda in his handwriting on a few loose sheets of paper are these sentences abbreviated from different paragraphs of Phillips Brooks' sermon on "The Light of the World":

"The divine life is the completion, not the surrender of our humanity. Christian character is only completed human character. The Christian is only the true man. The Christian graces are only the natural virtues (courage, patience, trustiness, humility) held up into the light of Christ. Manliness has not been changed into Godliness; it has fulfilled itself in Godliness.

"Thus what a great, clear thing salvation becomes. It is . . . the making of the man to be himself. . . .

"The Christian to Jesus is the man—the completed man. With what naturalness this idea clothes the invitations of the Gospel.

They are no strange summons to some distant unknown land; they are God's call to you to be yourself; they appeal to the homesickness in the soul. . . . That you should be the thing you have been and not be that better thing, that new man, is unnatural and awful. . . .

"This is the true ground for the appeal you desire to make to other souls. 'Come home, come home.' 'I have found the homestead.' 'I have found the Father.' 'I have found the true manhood. I have found what you and I and all men were made to be. . . .'

"What then? If Christ can make you know yourself; if as you walk with Him day by day, He can reveal to you your sonship to the Father; if, keeping daily company with Him, you can come more and more to know how natural is goodness and how unnatural sin is to the soul of man; if, dwelling with Him who is both God and man, you can come to believe both in God and man, then you are saved—saved from contempt, despair, into courage and hope and charity and the power to resist temptation and the passionate pursuit of perfectness.

"It is as simple and as clear as that. Our religion is not a system of ideas about Christ. It is Christ. To believe in Him is what? To say a creed? To join a church? No, but to have a great, strong divine Master whom we perfectly love, whom we perfectly trust, whom we will follow anywhere and who, as we follow Him or walk by His side, is always

drawing out in us our true nature and making us determined to be true to it through everything, and finding the deepest truth—that we are the sons of God. . . ."

And again, under the text of Paul's words to the Galatians, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus":

"Oh! that we bear the marks of our Lord Jesus visible to His tenderness, however faint to the eye of man. Wherever there is any form of self-conquest (of pride, ambition, envy, passion, indolence, self-indulgence, impurity) there is one of the marks of Jesus—marks however faint. And this is not beyond the strength of any one of us. . . .

"With all the energies of an immortal life let us strive to bear at least these marks—in virtues won, in faults corrected, in sins repented. All sins leave their scars, even when the wound is healed; but after forgiveness the very scars are as Bossuet said of the wounds of the immortal Conde.—"Proofs of the protection of Heaven."

"If we can take with us no saintly self-denials, no rich spiritual gifts, no noble services, when we stand before Christ in judgment, let us at least take the traces of wounds which His grace has closed—proofs of recovery. It was for this that Christ died and rose again and ever maketh intercession for us."

In 1896 there came another break in the circle of those he loved best. That year, his mother died.

Thus he writes to Mrs. Raymond:

"The Hill, August 14, 1896.

"My beloved Aunt Sally:

"Once more we rejoice in the Lord and His gracious dealing with our beloved while we sorrow, as we may, that we can no longer minister, in our feeble way, to her whose tender, loving recognition was so precious to her children's souls.

"The dear Lord understands all this and does not chide us that we both sorrow and rejoice.

"The blasting heat of the past week prostrated dear Mother beyond the help of physicians, though, for a few short hours on Tuesday we almost dared to hope. . . . She recognized us all most sweetly and affectionately early Wednesday, and yesterday at two slipped peacefully away into the life so radiant with our beloved.

"What a life and what a memory! . . .

"To your dear household who have blessed us in joy and sorrow, as no other has or can, we send our love, deeper still—now that a new bond is ours.

"Devotedly,

"John."

And on August 18th he writes again:

"Truly if ever a soul might say 'Thy gentleness hath made me great'—it was Mother's, and yet hers was the last to think so obvious a truth. . . .

". . . The children (except George who arrived later) were all here with Mother to be recognized and blessed and caressed. . . . You may divine the heavenly beauty and dignity of the sweet face that had never lost its early grace. After the simple service conducted by the Episcopal rector, a dear friend, when all the friends had withdrawn, I read the Scriptural passages from Mother Raymond's memorial and made a brief prayer with our loved ones only kneeling by or near the precious body, and thus in family prayer which was our Beloved's delight we bade farewell to the dear, dear form, glorified always but now transfigured—and yet to us ever the same. Oh, how we shall bless God for you all on the birthday—and every day, and hope for a speedy meeting! . . .

"Through all these deep waters the presence and potency of your tender spirit, as in times past, have been our dear possession, and in Him, to whom you have ever led us so surely and so sweetly, we are strong."

And in another letter dated simply "Christmas," he writes:

"We have hung our stockings and exchanged our gifts in the study in which, as Mother's room, our first Christmas joys were known. The place is perfect for the purpose,

and I am sure that the pure and heavenly spirit of her who glorified the room so many years shared our simple joys to-day."

Upon a tablet erected to his mother's memory in the chapel of the school he wrote this inscription:

Mother, Comforter, Friend
In strength, gentle
In love, selfless.
In service, tireless
In patience, joyous
Her Children Rise Up and Call Her Blessed.

As his eldest had died in 1890, so in 1900 from the same illness, his youngest one, the exquisite little Helen, went away.

To this new sorrow he brought again the steadfast and courageous faith which he had learned beyond all faltering. But henceforth there was in his spirit a vaster note. The old sparkle and playful banter still were his, but underneath these lay that still profundity of unrevealed emotion whose depths are filled with tears.

"He went so blithely on his way
The way men call the way of life,
That good folk who had stopped to pray
Shaking their heads, were wont to say
It was not right to be so gay
Upon that weary road of strife:

He whistled as he went, and still
He bore the young where streams were deep,
He helped the feeble up the hill,
He seemed to go with heart athrill,
Careless of deed and wild of will—
He whistled, that he might not weep."

CHAPTER IX

FINAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND A FINISHED LIFE

Growth of the School—The Fire in 1901—Pneumonia in the School—The Typhoid Epidemic of 1902—The Breaking of John Meigs' Health—Visits to Bad Nauheim—Letters Concerning the School and Its Future—Death in 1911.

THE last decade of John Meigs' life and work at The Hill was marked by much achievement and also by much trial. In December, 1900, another large and handsome building containing recitation rooms on the first floor and rooms for the boys on the floors above, and called the "East Wing," had been built at right angles to the schoolroom on the side opposite the quadrangle.

During the Christmas vacation in December, 1901, it caught on fire in some undiscovered manner between the time when the night-watchman left and the time very shortly afterwards when the first servants arrived from outside the buildings. Since the boys and masters were away there was no one in the building, and the fire, when it began, was unseen until too late to check it. A high wind was blowing, and the building burned fiercely; and though the work of the men employed at the school and of the town fire department

kept the blaze from spreading to the other buildings, the East Wing itself was almost completely destroyed.

In the midst of the fire there happened a little incident which showed with a kind of delightful vividness the way in which John Meigs' spirit could rally and find humor even in the midst of disaster. On the day before, which was Saturday, one of the best-loved of the old boys, Upton Alexander, had telegraphed that he was in Philadelphia, and that he wanted to come up to The Hill for a quiet Sunday. The Professor took the telegram from Mrs. John who had opened it and said, "Let me answer that." So he dictated this: "Come for your quiet Sunday, and bring your sneakers with you." When the fire broke out early the next day, which was Sunday, Alexander, of course, was aroused by the general alarm, and throwing on his clothes, and snatching up a boy's military cap which happened to be in the room where he was sleeping, he rushed out and began to help the other men in fighting the flames. For a while it looked as though the whole school would be swept away. The wind was blowing perilously, and at the most critical hour of the fire word was brought that on account of the fact that some repairs were in process to the town reservoir, it was possible

that the water would hold out only half an hour longer. It was at this juncture that Meigs, with all the possibilities which this news brought before him, caught sight of Alexander in his motley costume, working feverishly, with hatchet in hand, at a window frame outside the "old boys' room." The incongruity of this with the "quiet Sunday" struck him, and he shouted up, "Hey, Upton! Got your sneakers on?" Alexander looked back at him with shocked and reproachful astonishment. "How could he be thinking of a joke," he said afterwards to Mrs. Meigs, "when the whole school was about to burn up?"

Once again Meigs set himself to the task of reconstruction. The building had been so recently completed, and embodied so fully all his ripest ideals for the school that it was almost exactly duplicated. A passage in a letter which he wrote to his sister the next summer indicates the only changes that were made.

"You will be glad to know that with the exception of the one part of the East Wing which stood directly above the Greek Room, the building is under roof. I do not see why fairly rapid progress should not be made in pushing it forward to completion. As the basement and first story were so little

affected by the fire, a good deal of the tedious and heavy work connected with the piping and plumbing will be avoided.

"As you may know, I have decided to enlarge the part of the building in which the Greek Room was located by about eighteen feet, which will secure to us an additional classroom and six rooms for boys, which will accommodate the third boy in the cottage rooms, who is there and everywhere a nuisance and will soon be, I am happy to say, a thing of the past."

Meanwhile, for the winter of 1902, a temporary recitation building was put up; the boys were quartered in the infirmary and in buildings near the school, and the work went on as usual. The new East Wing was ready for the opening of the next session in the spring.

Some years before a movement had been begun by the Alumni, inspired chiefly by Mr. Alfred Raymond, of Brooklyn, and Mr. William S. Clawson, of Philadelphia, to raise funds to build a chapel as the gift of the old boys to the school. Up to this time, Sunday services as well as the daily morning and evening prayers, had been held in the schoolroom. In 1904, the chapel, built of sandstone, larger and more beautiful than had at first been planned, was finished and dedicated to the use of the school.

The chapel stands some fifty yards northeast of the headmaster's residence, and just beyond the corner of the West Wing, to which it is placed at right angles. It is of a simple and massive, yet beautiful type of collegiate Gothic. To the south there is an entrance through a porch, and to the east another entrance under an arched cloister, which runs along that side of the building from the south front to where, near the northern end, rises a square tower. Within, the chapel is finished in limestone and brick. Wide lancet windows on the floor level, and in the clerestory above light it. The organ is in the northeast corner within the base of the tower, and opposite that is a transept. The deep chancel, which is apsidal in form, bears upon its walls these words: "Watch Ye. Stand Fast In The Faith. Quit You Like Men. Be Strong." A large triple lancet window over the south door bears in its center the shield of the school, and underneath it the school motto, "Whatsoever things are true." A tablet on the wall is inscribed thus:

> "As a token of love and loyalty to the School
> And to those whose lives have inspired it,
> This chapel has been erected by the Alumni."

Meigs' appreciation of what the Alumni had done was great. He wrote to Mr. Claw-

son: "I cannot put into words my personal feeling of gratitude and affection for you and Charles Hatfield for the untiring and self-sacrificing devotion to the enterprise that you have shown."

One other building, finished in 1910, marked the climax of John Meigs' constructive work. It stands parallel to the old Sixth Form wing some 100 yards to the north, and with the chapel at the west, forms another open quadrangle. It was the largest, as it was the newest, of all the buildings, and is used for rooms for masters and boys.

Meanwhile the grounds—and particularly the athletic grounds—had been steadily enlarged, until the school encompassed about 120 acres, with five football fields, besides the cinder running track and the many tennis courts.

The year of 1902, which began with the many cares incident to the reconstruction of the burned buildings, was to hold within itself the deepest anxieties and the gravest sorrows that John Meigs ever had to face in connection with the life of the school.

In February, there broke out in the school an epidemic of pneumonia. Twenty-four boys were ill at different times, and two died. Upon the headmaster the burden of care was very heavy, and the grief of parents pressed upon

him as his own. Yet for himself and others he lifted up that largest aspect of sorrow which he himself had learned, "What a divine comfort to know that P. . . . has been so good and true a lad, so thoroughly conscientious and steadfast in all his life's relations and duties. . . . How our hearts rejoice with the lad and sorrow with the parents! And yet there is more . . . joy than sorrow, and I prayed to-night that we might all truly rejoice at our friend's high promotion to fellowship so close and satisfying with God and Christ. Even so—may we one day attain!"

To his sister, Miss Elizabeth, who was in Europe, he wrote of February 14th:

"Since my letter of a fortnight ago was mailed, much has happened to make the year . . . monumental in our experience. . . . Marion and I are together undergoing with other parents what we ourselves have been called to undergo, and so recently that we can, perhaps, speak words of greater comfort than those who have not known so recently the sorrows and the consolations, too, that have been our blessed portion.

"Among the new boys one of the finest was George Lawrence Laflin, of Chicago. He had always been delicate, super-sensitive, and spiritually and mentally gifted beyond his years. He was diffident and shy, but won my

heart the first time I looked into his eyes, and ever since, until the end came, has he been very dear to me.

"During the Christmas holidays he had a slight illness, which was followed by the fatal illness of his father's mother, to whom he was tenderly devoted, and who died of pneumonia just before the end of the vacation. . . . From her funeral he came directly to The Hill sick, depressed and saddened. He fell ill after a few days and developed pneumonia, which quickly led to his death. His parents were with him and everything possible was done to avert the fatal termination of his sickness, for which the dear fellow was singularly ready. He walks in light if ever a boy was prepared to.

"At the same time that he fell ill several others, with varying early symptoms, developed pneumonia, and on Wednesday morning Graham Baker's condition became so hopeless that, in order to avert from the fellows the shock of a second death and particularly that of an old boy, I decided to close the school for a fortnight, thus anticipating the Easter recess, and in order to give the boys the mental relief incident to their going home and avoiding here the depression inevitable to Graham's death, then imminent. The dear fellow passed away that afternoon and his parents, who chanced to be in New York, were with him as they had been from Sunday evening, when they arrived.

"When we remember that last year there was not a single case of serious illness, we

find it very hard to understand the present plague of pneumonia. It has, however, been everywhere. Groton School has been closed and yesterday we heard that St. Mark's, too, had been closed and that they have pneumonia at Hotchkiss. It seems to be of an unusual type, due to atmospheric and not local conditions.

"Our first fear was that the exposure of the boys incident to the emergency houses since the fire might have conduced to the unusual number of cases, but the fact is that more than two-thirds of the boys who have been, or are, ill are inmates of the regular school buildings. This is, in a sense, gratifying and consoling, for otherwise we should feel responsibility for the possible exposure of the fellows to the rigors of the winter. We had two weeks ago, when the trouble began, frightful weather, which has, however, improved decidedly and affords sick and well a better chance to survive it.

"Miss Cameron, Mrs. Smith and Miss Ryan have been simply magnificent in this crisis, and everybody has been as kind and considerate and helpful as could be imagined. The boys themselves have been heroic, calm, serene and steadfast, even to the point of questioning the real occasion for their dismissal for a time."

And after the Easter vacation he wrote:

"The boys have come back to us in fine spirit. Their demeanor throughout these crit-

ical weeks has been sublime, serene and cheerful beyond all praise. Somehow we feel that our fellowship in suffering has been helpful to us; and the parents have been noble in their sympathy and hopefulness."

With a great thankfulness and relief Dr. and Mrs. Meigs saw that school session come to an end. As they stood on the deck of the little steamer that took them up Lake George to their summer cottage, he looked out over the beautiful, still water and said to her, "Does it seem possible that we have put this most awful year behind us?"

Yet a greater crisis than that of the pneumonia was impending. Scarcely had they arrived at the cottage, near Sabbath Day Point, when letters began to come telling that one boy and another and another was ill with typhoid. Meigs hurried back instantly to The Hill to see if he could discover there any explaining cause. The water system had been one of the prides of the school, with an artesian well of its own, and a system of drainage planned and executed under the direction of Colonel George E. Waring, the famous sanitary engineer who transformed the cities of Cuba. But it was found that underground a pipe had burst, and a leakage had percolated a long distance by a fissure in the rock until it had contaminated the well. Meigs immedi-

ately gave orders for the installation of an absolutely new system, taking the water from a new source, filtering even that which went into the swimming pool, and sterilizing all that was used for cooking and drinking;—sent out letters to the parents of all the boys telling them the facts and went back to Lake George with a burdened heart, knowing that tidings of illness and danger were likely to multiply.

And they did. One after another the letters came telling of this one and that whom the fever had attacked. From the point on the beautiful shore at Bluff Head where his house was, Meigs could see the mail boat steam into sight far down the Lake, long before it reached Sabbath Day Point to which his letters came. With a daily agony of apprehension he used to watch it, fearful of the news it brought. The weary list of the stricken grew as the days went by, to nearly one hundred, masters and boys. Then came the news of this one and another—five in all —who had died. Among the boys who were most ill was "Manny" Holabird, a leader in every aspect of the life of The Hill—in face and body beautiful, an athlete and scholar, the kind of beloved figure to whom the boys looked up as one of their heroes. When John Meigs learned that he, too, seemed at

the point of death his cup of agony was full. It was his custom to go into his own room with his wife every morning after breakfast to read together George Matheson's "Times of Retirement," and to pray. This day the depths of his soul cried out, and he prayed: "Oh, my God, take anything we have, take our children, but spare Manny!" It was not so to be. Two days later came the news that Holabird was dead.

In the chapel at The Hill is this tablet to his memory, written by John Meigs himself:

> William Holabird, Jr.
> April 4, 1884—August 18, 1902
> "Manny"
> Athlete, Scholar, Gentleman.
> For his loyal friendship, and for his fidelity to the highest standards of the school, which he helped to lift higher still, beloved and honored.
> His strength was as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure.

That summer, a certain man, with blundering sympathy, said to John Meigs: "What effect do you suppose all this dreadful happening will have on your school?" He turned upon him with fierce amazement, "My school, my school," he said, "I am not thinking of the school, I am thinking of these boys!"

When the school opened in September, a

larger number than ever were on the application list. And one night the door opened, and in walked the father of "Manny" Holabird, bringing his only other son.

Many letters came which must have helped over the sad road. One of the men who used to come to preach at The Hill wrote:

"My dear Hero:

"I have been on the point of writing to you for a long time past to express my sympathy with you in your awful burden and my profound admiration for the way you have borne it. It is wonderful to me—this triumph of yours, as witnessed to me by the loyalty of your boys. God bless you."

In this grievous year John Meigs learned, perhaps, better than he had ever known before how deeply the school was intrenched in the hearts of many; but the wounds of his own sufferings were deep. After that year his physical strength, which had been great, began gradually to wane.

In one of his letters of February, 1903, is this comment:

"In a brief conversation at Pittsburgh with the Secretary of the Treasury, who has just returned from the Lincoln's birthday celebration at Chicago, I was expressing regret at A. . . .'s departure when he said, 'Yes,

A. . . . is a greater man than the country has perhaps realized. He has reached the summit of an earthly career and his time to die is *now.'* I returned to Washington recently from my brother's death-bed. He was just fifty and I felt his going very keenly, particularly at his age; on my going to the Club in Washington, I met Mr. K. . . ., formerly a distinguished member of Congress from my state, and exclaimed upon the long interval which had lapsed since last I saw him or knew of his doings. He had been two months in a hospital and few knew the fact. I said to myself, better dead at fifty than alive at eighty."

In the spring of 1906 came the keenest personal disappointment which marked his whole life at The Hill,—a discovery which forced him to separate almost immediately from the school one of the masters whom he had loved and trusted most. He writes:

"Matters are moving on quietly and on the whole surprisingly well. It is really an impressive illustration of a familiar principle that no one is indispensable that . . .'s dropping out affords. It will, of course, be precisely the same in the case of any one or all of us, so far as the main affair of common and commanding interest—the school—is concerned. The men have rallied so nobly and assumed so strong tho' silent a protectorate of its large interests that one is greatly

heartened. These leaden days have a golden setting and a glorious dawn to follow."

But the "leaden days" cast their long shadow on his heart, nevertheless. His hopes and plans for the organization of the school, his personal affection, his confidence,—all were involved in the sudden and deep distress. He slept restlessly, and would cry out sometimes at night in words that showed his dreams were tracing again the experience which had put its mark upon his very inmost spirit.

The life in the summer at the cottage on Lake George came in these years to be to him more and more an oasis of refreshment. He rejoiced in the simplicity and quiet of the little house; and reveled in the beauty of the blue lake and the mountains which spread their lovely panorama before his door. He could play with the children, and read for hours aloud with "Mrs John"; and always at mail time he would go across the Lake to the post-office at Sabbath Day Point, and often at other hours go out here and there in a small launch which he loved to run.

In one of his letters to his sister in the summer of 1906, he writes:

"Little as there is really eventful in the swift gliding of the days and weeks here at

the Lake, it will interest you to know how well and happy we are with the children's friends and joys. . . .

"We are finding much more comfort in the place than we had dared hope for; tho' Marion finds it hard to live in a *mere house*, and would not accept the land with the house on it as a free gift from divine or human hands, if we might have a cabin of logs, with bark and moss on them, and a leaky roof and bugs chasing over us on pine branch lairs, and an occasional light meal of thick cream and predigested stuff, preferably in tablets, one of which would carry us three days, not including Sundays.

"The launch has been out of commission since our arrival, except for three or four days, but will be in condition this afternoon. You can imagine the pleasant sense of being marooned for two weeks or more on the 'offside' of space. . . ."

By the fall of this year there had begun to make itself felt the serious heart trouble which, with intervals of seeming improvement, grew worse until his death, five years later. The development of this disease burdened his mind often with the apprehension that he might be crippled in a way which to his active temperament seemed worse than death. The fact that he had had three brothers who broke down in middle life and lingered in invalidism, made him fear this

the more. Repeatedly he was heard to say that he prayed God would mercifully let him drop in the harness—and the end when it came was the answer to his prayer. When the doctors told him what he must do to help check the malady, he set himself to face the necessity with characteristic thoroughness and determination. All his life he had been a man free from all dissipation, but he had eaten what he pleased with never an apparent cause to hesitate. Now, however, he had to accept a most rigid, and to him often unpleasant, diet, with coffee and many other things he had been accustomed to eliminated. He conformed himself to the new state of things so simply and immediately that someone remarked on it one day, and asked whether he had not found the restriction very hard. He answered: "Anything is easy which you make up your mind to do."

In December, 1906, he went for a while to the sanitorium at Watkins Glen, N. Y., and in April, 1907, he was at Winnetka, Illinois, for another enforced rest. He writes home:

"Watkins Glen,
December 6, 1906.

"I am relaxing and am doing my best to accelerate my cure by working with the doctors to the limit of my heart and will." . . .
[*He found great happiness in the friendship*

and companionship of Mrs. Cyrus McCormick.] "Dr. K. . . . seemed to think that Mrs. McCormick and I naturally fell to talking on kindred interests too much and thus intensified rather than lightened our thinking. She certainly is a wonder and we still have an occasional shy at each other. . . . The more I see of her the more impressed I am with her mind and spirit. We have established an abiding friendship I believe, and surely she has made my stay here marvelously different from what it would have been without her.

"I am hoping the new term will open happily. How my heart aches to be out of it and yet I am so grateful for the loyal hearts there to carry on the work."

And from Winnetka:

"April 21, 1907.

"We shall go to church with J. . . . this morning. They are much comforted to know that their present minister will retire soon. It is a common but always pathetic ordeal when a man is no longer efficient in his church, or other field of service, and just now my sympathy with such an one is especially keen!"

"April 23, 1907.

"I rejoice with you that Mr. Speer was so strong and impressive. God grant that the fellows, especially the Sixth Form, may have received some uplift that will endure. What of the Sixth Form? Are they developing

any larger sense of responsibility, any finer perception of their duty for moral leadership?"

But the treatment at Watkins Glen and the rest at Winnetka was not enough to give him back his health. When the school year drew to a close he realized that he would have to take heroic measures if he was to find restoration. The doctors told him that he ought to go to the baths in Germany as the most hopeful chance of arresting the trouble with his heart. So, very reluctantly, in this summer of 1907 he started on the first of what were to prove the repeated enforced trips abroad.

To one of the masters on the eve of his departure he writes:

"This is, believe me, a mild expression of my sense of peculiar gratitude and obligation to you for your sympathy and co-operation in the most difficult years of my life, during which your loving loyalty has been a balm to the soul of

"Yours affectionately,
"John Meigs."

From the steamer he writes home:

"S. S. 'Deutschland,' July 2, 1907.

"This has been so far, the serenest sea voyage I have ever had. Not a qualm nor a suggestion of physical discomfort of any sort;

enough acquaintances on board to feel the joy of human fellowship with whom a few words a day signify much in little; plenty of sleep in the twenty-four hours, and above all, the priceless quiet times for that dearest fellowship with my dear ones and with our loving Christ, who seem nearer and dearer as my earthly cares recede and my earthly blessings tower so high and precious. I try to think of you all as you are and dismiss such apprehensions as too easily face one and plague one in his absence, for the same dear Lord holds us all in His tender keeping."

To Mrs. Meigs he writes from Bad Nauheim, July 7, 1907:

"I had my first bath Saturday at twelve and my second this morning at nine. Tomorrow is my rest day, indicating more deliberation here than at Glen Springs in the treatment, though I don't welcome this save as a starter, for I 'ain't got long to stay here.'"

"Yesterday after luncheon we took a drive in and about the town to get our bearings, and after dinner strolled up to the 'Kurhaus,' an establishment for the entertainment of the visitors, who are taxed $5.00 a head to maintain it, and of the citizens, who may buy family tickets at a considerable reduction. It is like a great big club house, with a fine reading room, billiard room, restaurant and a large expanse of terrace, on which are set tables for 'al fresco' service of food and

drink, and best of all, an orchestra of about fifty pieces which gives concerts three times daily in the season. There is also a theater attached which gives operas and plays. This afternoon we drove out to Steinfurth, which is famous for its rose gardens belonging to the Schultheis brothers, who have 250,000 bushes in bloom in the height of the season, and an old tower with a medieval castle and a modern thriftiness and wholesomeness that would put most American towns of its size to the blush."

"July 9, 1907.

"Nauheim is beautifully ordered and kept. Such scrupulous neatness would astound the minds of the residents of Pottstown and I should like to have a few of them see what is possible in the way of municipal housekeeping."

"July 12, 1907.

"The weather since our arrival and, we are informed by friends, since early June, requires a more gifted pen than mine to have justice done. It is both cold and rainy and as there is no provision for heating moderately the hotel we shiver and shake at intervals when the infrequent and coy sun glances at us askance; still I am so busy with fussing that it is pretty much of a muchness for me however the wind blows and the Dutch goes. You should be here to listen to our fluent conversation with the natives, who shy like W. . . . at an unexpected meeting on a corner. I am

supposed to do nothing but loaf and recover from the possible tax upon my system of the baths, three of which have intervened since my former 'rest day' which of itself is encouraging as indicating the doctor's opinion of my constitutional strength of resistance,—though I am obviously in the category of 'him who putteth his armor on' and shall refrain from the feeblest suggestion of boasting.

"Two weeks and a half have passed since I sailed and they seem like months. Indeed I do not dare to allow myself to measure time or space or sensibilities lest shipwreck overtake me utterly. My heart is so absolutely elsewhere that I sometimes wonder how it can be here at all to be benefited by the treatment. I try to be full of thankfulness to God that I can make this effort,—and effort it truly is,—to better my condition when it is denied so many."

"July 15, 1907.

"It is unspeakably solacing to my soul to feel that I have tidings of you all up to yesterday, for one does not need companionship in general terms so much as the companionship of his very own. I might have a score of friends here to-day but I should, actually, still be lonely; but having none and my dear ones in spiritual communion and none to intervene I am with you all in a deeper sense. As Stevenson says, 'When we are alone we are only nearer the absent.' . . . I heard from L. . . . that John Timothy Stone was

on the steamer with him. How I would like to catch the old heathen over here and coach him in Dutch."

"July, 1907.

"I have had a very long and exciting afternoon with a Mr. L. . . . from P. . . . and must lie to for repairs. He talks faster than anyone I have encountered for a long time and laughed so much that I feel as if I had been in a hen roost for an afternoon's diversion."

"July 21, 1907.

"Well, it looks now, Heaven be praised! as if we should return *two weeks* earlier! ! ! ! though I cannot hope to be with you at the beloved Lake for my birthday, I may expect to arrive on the second, reaching New York by September first if we arrive in time. What a joy and rapture to think of ten days at the Lake! ! ! ! God be thanked for this much more of life."

"July 24, 1907.

"You speak most naturally of my coming back a 'new man' in point of energy and vigor. This I verily believe is not to be. If, however, I can secure from this treatment such reinforcement as will enable me to go on, moderately, with my beloved work for a few years longer, even though I should have to come here summer after summer to prolong my period of service, I shall be unspeakably thankful—for there is so much to be done

for which it seems as if my heart and soul were only preparing. Pray for this at least; pray indeed for perfect restoration, if God so wills,—but we shall rest content if it be His will that I may go on for a little while longer, though I do crave the service of not a few years. It is said that the real benefit of the cure is not appreciable for weeks and even months, so that we shall be patient and expectant. It seems as if the sight of my beloved ones will do my heart more good than all else man can devise. Still I want you to believe me hopeful — and grateful — beyond words, that I have had this rare chance to do the best we know for my health."

"July 31, 1907.

"There is a mere chance of our getting away on the 'Kaiser Wilhelm II' which holds the record for the transatlantic run, which should arrive not later than the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth, so that I should be with you for my birthday, if this fortune favors me. I finish my 'cure' two or three weeks earlier than the doctor suggested two weeks ago and I don't see what better use I could possibly make of these days than by starting correspondingly earlier for my loved ones' abode at the dear old Lake; if you know something wiser for me to do, you may cable me, collect.

"Among the guests here, the most trying person on my nerves, is a l. . . ., who brought a card of introduction to me from the father of one of our boys. This gentle soul sits up

calmly in the hotel lobby and enjoys indulging in a monologue in a tone which overpowers the hum of quiet conversation and, naturally, concentrates observation upon himself—and me,—until I run away abruptly to the wondering eyes and attention of the other guests. He is just as likely to be telling how bad the food is as to be confiding to me the state of his internal department or the low opinion he has of doctors generally. As he 'has it in' for most everybody and everything on earth but his little four-year-old girl at home and his family cook, he does not lack for themes for his soliloquizing. I am taking most of my meals in my room just now to escape for a season, at least, his personal attentions. It is truly a good experience for me in a way, but does not minister to peace of mind in my feeble estate."

"August 6, en route to Frankfort.

"I took my last bath Sunday morning, spent my last 'rest day' somewhat restlessly as you may imagine, and having packed deliberately during the afternoon was ready for an early start for Frankfort. My final interview with the doctor was very satisfactory in its helpful suggestions as to my mode of life, etc. I asked him such questions as I had jotted down and he answered me clearly and frankly. The main question, after all, was as to the presumable effect of my malady upon my life-work. He said if I moderated the ordering of my life, and deputed to others duties that could be transferred so as to

secure genuine mental relief from anxieties as to their conduct, regulating my diet as was practicable and obtaining frequent intervals of rest, I ought to be able to go on for years of happy and useful service. My trouble has only advanced far enough to summon the reserves of my vital powers to resist and we should be able to check the progress of the arterio-sclerosis, by vigilance and moderate employment of my strength or weakness. I asked him if I should have to return to Nauheim next year. He said, 'That would depend upon your condition later on.' It's heavenly to be rid of the sense of treatment for a time. I shall rest and be sensible and do all the loafing I can."

"Burgenstock, August 8, 1907.

"We arrived at Lucerne at midnight and reached this place of marvelous beauty about noon yesterday. We came up from the Lake, thirteen hundred feet, by a funicular railway to the narrow level of the ledge of the mountain on which the hotel is perched. We are higher, here, than the top of Black Mountain and while the view is similar it is vastly more majestic with its snow-capped mountains piled up to the sky on the eastern horizon and the rocky abutment of range upon range in every other direction than the north.

"Lucerne nestles at the head of the Lake, perhaps twelve or fifteen miles away, looking last night with its myriad lights like a fairy-land, while the deep carmine band of sunset light, confined closely to the horizon by the

dull leaden clouds, gave an unearthly hue to the wondrous scene of beauty. Near at hand are the characteristic Alpine pastures and little farms, and the lovely villas lie along the Lake in easy sight. The hotel is perched on the edge of the cliff, which seems to fall sheer into the Lake. One stands on the esplanade and looks into space, almost bewildered by the lavish beauties on every hand. The silence is not of earth, and yet the earth is so real. The mountain tops are hung here and there with fleecy clouds, the snow-capped peaks little obscured by their passing shadows, and at many points the sharp Sierras cleave the blue with dazzling whiteness. The Jungfrau is visible and many another famous mountain height. I feel so selfish amid such entrancing beauty as the landscape affords, that I groan in spirit to think I have none of my beloved here to share it with me. I shall be devoutly glad to spend my days here instead of in the more frequented haunts of men until I start for Paris and Cherbourg."

"August 12, 1907.

"It is a little past seven, early for breakfast on this mountain top. Yesterday was a most beautiful and interesting day. At eight there was early Communion in the parlor, conducted, of course, by a Church of England clergyman who dispensed the bread and wine to one other person than myself. He is a curate of St. Judes', Brixton, England, and is sent here as I suppose scores of others are sent, to minister to the chance people at the

resorts. I do my reading of our 'Daily Strength,' 'Rests by the River' and the New Testament before breakfast, so that about quarter-past ten I took the boat from Brunnen to see the surpassing beauties of the view from Axenstein, which is on the mountains higher up, I should say, than the Grand Hotel, Burgenstock. I am more and more impressed with the narrowness of the Lake as contrasted with Lake George. It is more like a river as to width and would not compare with our really great rivers in this respect, but the soaring mountains and piles of jagged rocks, snow-clad peaks and vista after vista among the receding ranges give a quite different impression that is more majestic and overwhelming as an expression of Nature's grandeur.

"These Swiss have the genius for grasping the salient points of a view and locating just there, whenever possible, their hotels and resorts. The apparent inaccessibility of a prospect seems to have no sort of discouraging influence upon them, for their 'funiculars' or 'electrics' shoot up into the clouds if need be, as blithely as the birds, and the wonder is that to their enterprise the travelers of almost every nation respond, for you find nearly all of these mountain resorts crowded and in some cases hopelessly so; and the crowds that push up for views alone are amazing. These last days will slip away swiftly I believe, for I keep up a kind of routine that helps to lubricate the flight of the hours. To think that I can say 'next week' I sail and shall soon be saying 'this

week' and 'to-morrow'! It's a sort of suspended animation just now, but I shall really live soon, God willing.

"I am distressed to learn that G. . . . has been 'rejected' in Tech. That is the word they use in reporting on his exam and it is a bad one. I shall cable to-day to inquire whether he will be refused another chance to qualify. The truth is that G. . . . fooled away his chance to recover from his poor work in his 'preliminaries' during the autumn term, when he set about doing the same old evasive and tricky things instead of boning right down to business. It is a most clear and sorrowful illustration of the perils of half-heartedness and slippery methods."

On September second he wrote to Mrs. Raymond from Lake George:

"On Wednesday last I returned to the beloved Lake with Marion, who had met me on my arrival in New York the preceding day, by the good ship 'Kaiser Wilhelm II.'

"Our voyage of six days was happily uneventful, and the only incidents were those of good fellowship with two or three fine spirits I was glad to meet on sea or shore.

"After my Nauheim 'cure' I went to Lucerne and Burgenstock to be 'cured of the cure,' passing a day in Paris and three days in London, where I saw the . . .'s before sailing from Southampton.

"'The best is yet to be' according to the foreign doctors' predictions, who assure me

with the same confidence that 'Rough on Rats' reassures the intending purchaser that the rats do not die in the house, but after four or five months (during which the coroner may get in his work) I shall realize how great is the benefit I have derived from the baths. I do, seriously speaking, expect good results, whereof I have as yet observed only slight intimations.

"I have the great consolation that I have done the best I have known to regain my health, and I shall continue to be a law-abiding member of the Commonwealth."

Back of the cursory mention of the visit in London, lies a very characteristic incident which is best told in the words of the gentleman concerned in it. This is the letter he wrote to John Meigs on September 21st, 1907:

"My dear Man,

"There has not been a day, nor many hours of any day, since we said good-by, that I have not been thinking of you. Many letters have I written to you in my head. And yet, knowing how it is between us, I calmly let the writing wait its time and occasion.

"I do not suppose I can write to you the thanks that I could not speak. But I can tell you now perhaps better than I had time to tell you in your flash through London, what it was you did for me. In itself the material help you brought me was of even greater benefit than it could, perhaps, have been at

any other time. I was not only hard up, but tired out with working too long and with too little encouragement, in need of a holiday, and really even more out of health than I realized when I saw you. Thanks to you, I have had the holiday with an easy mind, and am, in spite of the operation performed about a week after you sailed, very much better for it. I am back in town again, and just settling back to work, and my mind is very full of you, and of the something over and above all that I have tried to express above, that you have done for me. I want to see whether I can tell you what it was.

"You brought to me, then, a wonderful proof of the permanence and the indestructibility of human friendship. That a man should come, as you came, to see whether I needed him, remembering me so intimately after twelve or thirteen years broken only by one meeting; that the almost schoolboyish delight of seeing my old chief again so unexpectedly should be so soon merged in the sense of unbroken and protective friendship—these and certain other aspects of the episode which I hinted at in talking to you, have given me an experience which I shall carry with me always as a possession invaluable.

"You have given me courage for my work; if I succeed in making it better work, I shall owe thanks to you for that also.

"There! I haven't half said what I wanted to say. But perhaps you will read some sense in the words."

With the breaking of his health Meigs began to look ahead to the time when the guidance of the school must pass into other hands; and he set himself to build up the organization which could assume control, when necessity came, without break or change in the work and spirit of the school. It was his hope that his son, Dwight R. Meigs, should succeed him in the headmastership—a hope which has since come true. But meanwhile, in the long absence which his illness caused, the school was in the charge of an Executive Committee of the most experienced and trusted masters.

From Florida, where he and Mrs. Meigs had gone for a little while in February, 1908, he wrote to one of the masters, Mr. Judson:

"I feel worse than you can quite know to miss all of this, which is as the breath of life to me—the return of the old fellows—not to speak, but merely to *be* at the old school where so many of us have suffered so much and perhaps been made stronger by it.

"You are a prophet of good tidings, indeed, and I rejoice, and at the same moment groan in spirit, to learn that the reunion promises so well.

"I shall write C. . . . S. . . . in regard to the Sheppard Testimonial from the old boys as a part of the general reception in his honor at Commencement. The supreme and crucial matter to secure is such absolute

secrecy as will give to the dear man the greatest surprise of his life. This can be insured if at the outset the importance is laid heavily upon the conscience of the Alumni. . . .

"If you find it agreeable to have Dwight named on the Executive Committee, as a connecting link, I shall be glad, but you will treat this suggestion in confidence and rely upon my appreciation of any objection thereto that may appear."

And again, a few days after Washington's Birthday:

"It was just like you, I am happy and proud to say, to sit down on Sunday and write me of the great event, while you were still dizzy and weary from the whirl of the preparations and the achievement itself.

"It may sound like special pleading but, believe me, this is, at least, but the spirit of our convictions that the reunion of 1908 will prove to be the most significant of all the delightful and blessed like occasions we have reason to remember with grateful and loving hearts. The inauguration of a new type of fellowship between the Alumni, the School, and the Masters, with the personal element, that has perhaps too much, through no conscious design or purpose of Mrs. John's and mine, pervaded the atmosphere, suspended if not suppressed, is a consummation devoutly to be wished for and to be thankful for now that it is accomplished.

"We recognize that there have been, and are and will be, under the compulsion of this deeper, impersonal spirit of devotion to the school, other torch bearers than ourselves, whom we bid hail and haste."

And at the same time he wrote to his sister:

"Feb. 28, 1908.

"My beloved Elizabeth:

"I believe that the new fellowship of the old fellows, the school and the Masters, will signify great things in the future, for one day those of us who like you and me have been at the forefront from the beginning, and Marion who seems always to have been there, despite the imperfect years before she joined us, will be shadowy memories—if our lives' prayers and efforts be not in vain; and it is well to give others a growing sense of their custodianship and adequacy therefor."

Through these years the religious elements in John Meigs' nature were growing more and more deep and earnest. Out of a great struggle he was seeking strength. The disease which was attacking his heart brought him periods of torturing pain, and sometimes made him irritable beyond his immediate control. He recognized this irritability in himself with acute distress, and sought with pathetic eagerness to overcome it. Once at evening prayers in the schoolroom he had prayed in a more than usually self-revealing way—

pouring out the torrent of his own appeal for patience and strength. As he came down the aisle when prayers were over, his quick eye caught a boy in some petty misdemeanor, and he loosed upon him instantly a perfect thunderbolt of scornful indignation. "How *could* you have done that just after praying for patience?" one of his family asked him; and he answered, "Why should I pray for it except that I need it terribly?"

Every morning he used to go—as indeed for many years he had been doing—into his study before breakfast to read his Bible and "Daily Strength for Daily Needs,"—to pray, to think, and to be alone with God. This one prayer, particularly—a prayer of Thomas Arnold's—he always used. He had a copy of it between the leaves of his "Daily Strength," and the paper on which it is written is worn and frayed.

"O gracious Father, keep me through Thy holy spirit; keep my heart soft and tender now in health and amid the bustle of the world; keep the thought of Thyself present to me as my Father in Jesus Christ; and keep alive in me a spirit of love and meekness to all men, that I may be at once gentle and active and firm. O strengthen me to bear pain, or sickness, or danger, or whatever Thou shalt be pleased to lay upon me, as Christ's soldier and servant; and let my faith over-

come the world daily. Perfect and bless the work of Thy spirit in the hearts of all Thy people, and may Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. I pray for this, and for all that Thou seest me to need, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Characteristic also of his thought and feeling is the hymn which he always gave out as one of those for the boys to sing in the chapel on Sunday evenings. Invariably in his later years the singing closed with this. Through the four verses which he loved best it was as though his own prayer were throbbing up to God:

At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;
O in what divers pains they met!
O with what joy they went away!

Once more 'tis eventide, and we,
Oppressed with various ills draw near;
What if Thy form we cannot see?
We know and feel that Thou art here.

O Saviour Christ, Thou too art Man;
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried;
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide.

Thy touch has still its ancient power;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all.

In the summer of 1908, he found it necessary to go to Bad Nauheim again, and from Europe he writes home:

"Nauheim, July 11, 1908.

"Last Sunday the minister at the English church preached from the text 'Come unto me all ye that labor,' etc., emphasizing the words 'come,' 'take' and 'learn' and strongly presenting the idea that Christ's invitation was to those willing to learn,—not the learned, as such, but those who desired to learn His way, His will. It was very simple, impressive and beautiful; for an English churchman most unusual in its breadth. Christ came, he said, not to found a church, a system, a theology—but to find souls willing to learn the law of love, the life of love."

"July 26, 1908.

"I have just returned from the services in the German Parish Church, of the Lutheran stock which has recently reabsorbed the German Reformed denomination. It is a good sign and a characteristic sign of the times I believe, to find churches seeking union rather than division. The impression is abroad that the German nation has lost its great religious motive and has become rationalistic, in the extreme. However this may be, it is stoutly contended that in household and public offices of religion the good old ways are followed and revered. The church this morning was full and emergency seats had to be

provided for a great many attendants, myself among the number. The congregation was more than ordinarily reverent, the preacher given to no declamatory frenzy, but quiet, reasonable and comforting, his voice soothing rather than stimulating, though I saw only one aged man in the gallery succumb to the honeyed tones of his voice. The volume of sound during the singing of the hymns was glorious and impressive. I have hitherto attended the English church but am glad to have made the change as an experience out of the common. Somehow it is much more stirring and gets hold of one's imagination to hear the service in another tongue and to feel that the 'earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof'; that we are all brethren and that He is the Father of us all. . . . A week hence when we leave, we shall have only grateful thoughts of our stay here, the trifling untoward incidents being quickly and finally expunged from our memory in the consciousness of the larger benefits."

In September he wrote to Mrs. Raymond:

"I feel more like my old self, physically, than I have felt for three or four years"; yet within two months he had to leave The Hill again. His two daughters had gone to Italy to be in school there for the winter; their mother was to join them; and it seemed best that he should go, too, for at least some of the months of the school session, to the

work of which he found himself unequal. Writing ahead from the steamer to his daughters, he says:

"I'm taking advantage of the quiet hours before luncheon to send you a line to tell you that we are approaching the coast of Ireland, though we can't smell the turf or the pigs in their ancestral castles. . . .

"As we were leaving The Hill the fellows gathered in the West Quadrangle, sang 'A thousand hands have labored long' and cheered us out of sight. At singing last Sunday night I spoke briefly and simply to the fellows about our going and their staying to hold high the common standard of our common love, the old school. They gave a very sympathetic and, to me, touching hearing, and we left home the next morning persuaded that both men and boys would do their best to guard their 'City on the Hill.'"

From Italy his thoughts turned back to The Hill and to all those who were part of its fellowship. In December he wrote this letter to be read in the Gymnasium at the Christmas gathering of all the servants and employees:

"Florence, Italy,
Dec. 10th, 1908.

"Dear Friends:

"Mrs. John and I want you to know that we are thinking of you all to-night and wish-

ing you, from the bottom of our hearts, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

"It is very easy and delightful for us to imagine just how you all are gathered to-night in the old Gymnasium at The Hill, though hard for you to fancy us in far-away Florence, about two hundred miles north of Rome.

"Strange as it may seem we feel somehow at home, in a small degree, at least, for Dwight and Margaret and Marion are with us, or near by; and you may be sure that our talk is very often of you and of what you are doing and saying and thinking.

"We know that you are, as ever, *doing* what you can to keep things going finely in our absence, for on you depends so much that no other helpers can possibly do; we believe, too, that you are saying and thinking kind and helpful things of each other—for without this sympathy that we all need, life is a poor and pitiable thing, and you and we believe that it can be made a joyous and blessed privilege by our exercise of an unselfish and kindly spirit in thought and speech and conduct.

"I have told you so often that you must weary of hearing, that we are all members one of another, and that your fidelity to us, and our fidelity to you alone makes our common work possible and worth while. I still feel this to be true, and more than ever true, and know that, as you are reminded of us, so far away from you all, you will each one echo our simple and affectionate prayer that

we may all be led in the coming year by the Father of us all into a more perfect service to Him and to each other.

"I have asked Mr. Hoffer to read you these friendly words of Christmas greeting; and as Miss Elizabeth and he take you by the hand, as Mrs. John and I have been so glad to do these many years, please remember that the children and we, in far-off beautiful Florence, are bearing you in grateful and faithful memory, as we recall our many years of fellowship and friendship at 'The Hill.'

"Yours faithfully,

"John Meigs."

The time in Florence was a very special joy to him, because "Mrs. John" was there, and both his daughters, and Dwight came from Oxford where he had been studying, to make the circle complete. To John Meigs' affectionate heart, this companionship with the ones he loved best, apart from the pressure of distracting responsibilities, was a supreme satisfaction. He delighted also in the beauty and romance of Florence, through the streets and art galleries of which he went with leisurely appreciation—and particularly into all the places where he could trace the footsteps of Dante, who long had been one of his high admirations.

In Europe he had the wider opportunity to do what he loved to do also at home—roam

about in old book-stores and other shops where he might pick up the curious and interesting things he was continually collecting. He gathered from time to time many exceedingly beautiful old prints, rare autograph letters and other papers, some of which he gave to his friends and others of which he hung on the walls of his study at The Hill. He pursued, from place to place, and finally secured and gave to "Mrs. John" on one of their anniversaries that which to them both, with their particular love of the poet's work, was a thing precious beyond price—the complete original manuscript of Browning's "Dramatis Personæ." He had a most unusual collection of Lowestoft and luster ware, brown, pink and silver,—and old blue china. The antique shops in Pottstown, richly stored with colonial furniture, were one of his unfailing resources of distraction and refreshment when he was tired with the pressure of the day's work at The Hill. When he went abroad, he found his rest and pleasure often in the same way of exploring places where beautiful and quaint things were to be found. And, as Mr. Robert E. Speer, who knew him in a long and intimate fellowship, has written: "His love of beautiful things was inevitably associated with his truth. . . . It was good taste not for its own sake, or thinned out into trifling selfish-

ness. Everything in life for him was for some uses, and these uses were the ends of love and character building, and the making of people, and the sweetening of life."

After three months in Florence, he turned homeward again, writing to one of the masters: "I shall return with eager and grateful heart to do whatever I can for our better service, and rejoice to anticipate meeting you all to whom so much of gratitude and love is due for your loyal and devoted fellowship."

To Mrs. Meigs, who remained in Florence, he wrote from Naples:

"February 22, 1909.

"We have just passed Corsica whose great son held Europe at bay for his few fitful but mighty years. I cannot forbear to think more charitably of Napoleon for the part he has had in making modern Italy possible."

"February 23, 1909.

"I have just returned from a few hours' visit to the city, the 'Deutschland' having reached Naples at ten o'clock in a blizzard, the first snow they have had in many years. The mountains about the bay, especially Vesuvius, are very lovely in their Mardi Gras decorations of white, and it looks as if tomorrow's sun would shine clear and strong. . . . The memories of those three months in Florence will always abide with me and stir an ever deepening sense of gratitude to

God for His goodness in making possible our common experience of uncommon mercies."

And to his daughters from the "Deutschland" as he neared New York:

"At half-past six A. M. we are making our way up 'Ambrose Channel' to New York, hoping to dock between nine and twenty-four o'clock, so to speak. . . . Yesterday afternoon a wireless from The Hill was handed me to this effect—' Pottstown, Pa., March 4th, John Meigs—We await your coming with joyful anticipation—The Hill School Committee.'

"You can imagine how happy I was to receive that message, and how it warmed the cockles of my old heart to have the fellows think of sending it out to sea to assure me they were glad I was coming back. It helps not a little to make my home-going very much easier . . . and only deepens my desire to signify to the fellows, one and all, more than I have ever been able to in bygone days. For this I shall strive in season and out of season."

Meanwhile in Pottstown eager preparations were being made to receive him, not only by the men and boys of the school, but by the townspeople also. A public invitation by the Burgess and the Town Council called all the citizens to meet at a given hour at the

Opera House and thence to march to The Hill for a reception which had been arranged for his coming home.

Thus he tells of what he found:

"The Hill, March 8, 1909.

"As we neared the pier Friday morning last at 10 o'clock, I saw the four ardent faces of E. . . . and M. . . . and H. . . . and G. . . . smiling their welcome and gladdening my heart to the core. After I had quickly finished with the customs officer, I disposed of the luggage, coming on to Pottstown by the train, arriving at 5:15. You can imagine how our tongues flew for 130 miles or more. As we approached the Chapel I was quite overcome to see the Quad decorated as for our great games, and banners, flags and pennants over the windows and on the walls and the whole school drawn up in the Quad cheering and singing until I felt like sinking into the ground.

"I said just a few words of grateful affection and they returned to their classes. On coming into the study I found it decorated with exquisite flowers from many of my friends and at supper on my table three great vases of Killarney roses from the Sixth Form.

"B. . . . invited me to take his place at prayers but I declined and he led as usual, giving out the School Hymn and 595. After prayers I went up to the desk and told the fellows 'off-hand' something of my travels and experiences and expressed my affectionate

appreciation of their thoughtfulness in cabling and greeting my return so as to make my home-coming, without you, so much less difficult.

"At a little after eight o'clock Mr. H. . . . came into the study and said some friends were down in the Gym and would like to see me. On arriving there, much to my consternation, I found very much such a state of affairs as the accompanying papers describe. You will, of course, absolve me from the imputation of most of the sheer drivel that the newspapers report. But I was overwhelmed by this manifestation of the townspeople's interest in my return, as you can well understand.

"The Gym was filled up by the release of the boys from study hour and there was high carnival for a little time, to which masters, some of their wives and the boys contributed their loving part. . . . I go to New York to attend the Union Seminary Directors' meeting to-morrow but intend to go slowly, generally, and to leave the school matters for this term in the good hands that have conducted them so splendidly during my absence. Everything and everybody are in the best spirit. It has been worth while to abdicate for these past months in order merely to see how efficient, harmonious and co-operative has been the spirit of all. The Sixth Form, below last year in scholarship, has been great in its desire and effort to serve the school in a large way.

"The way in which the fellows have been

coming in to see me on all kinds of business has been a great delight and comfort to my soul, as you well know."

In one of the Pottstown papers was this editorial:

"The welcome which was tendered Dr. John Meigs, the headmaster of The Hill School, on his return from a tour of Europe last evening, was a tribute to Pottstown's representative citizen that was as hearty as it was spontaneous. Surely no other occasion could have brought so many of Pottstown's people together for such a testimonial to a returning citizen. There have been other occasions when citizens of Pottstown have returned from abroad, after longer stays than Dr. Meigs made, but there was no outpouring of the residents of the town to do honor.

"And Dr. Meigs is deserving of all the honors that may be shown him. No other citizen of Pottstown has done so much to make Pottstown a better place in which to live than he. No other citizen has so generously stepped forward to aid all enterprises which had for their objects the welfare of the borough. No other citizen has aided so generously the poor and the afflicted in times of distress. In fact, Dr. Meigs has earned the title of Pottstown's representative citizen not so much because he craved the title, but because his fellow citizens felt that he deserved it.

"The loving cup that was presented to Dr.

Meigs last evening was an evidence of the esteem in which he is held by his neighbors here in Pottstown, but no mere silver token of affection could adequately express the love with which the people of the borough regard the headmaster of The Hill School. They know of his many acts of charity, although they were supposed to have been done by stealth, and they rejoice that Dr. Meigs has returned to Pottstown benefited in health by his sojourn abroad."

Such was the way his townsfolk expressed their opinion of John Meigs. But there happens to exist a letter which transmits the deliciously frank judgment of one of the boys about him, and the force of which is rather heightened, than otherwise, by its decidedly unconventional language. The boy was at The Hill when Meigs came back in 1909. The year after that he went to one of the eastern colleges, and it was from there he wrote to his father. The father copied part of his letter and sent it to Dr. Meigs.

Thus it ran: "The fellows here are fine, though of course, not as nice as The Hill crowd—none could be—but they are mighty fine, as near as possible to the 'Old Guard.' Personally, I don't think much of President A. . . ., that is, as president of a college,

tho' he seems well enough. Still he don't seem to me to have the 'pep' in him, and alongside of John Meigs would look like a pin in a haystack."

Then the father adds: "Youth's ideals, you know, are the strongest and most lasting; hence, well grounded, operate greatly in shaping the future life. And in my opinion just such schools as 'The Hill' are needed to start boys well, giving the foundation on which to build the character, and stability with which to fight and conquer the important battles the future holds for all. The stamp of The Hill is evident in all the colleges I know, and hear of; and you are the die."

In his own letters to Mrs. Meigs in Europe he writes:

"March 11, 1909.

"Here, everything is swinging forward toward the close of the term. The attitude of men and boys is splendid, and I am more and more gratified as I probe matters more deeply. I have had, this afternoon, conferences with the Sixth Form Committee, on the proposed permanent constitution for the Sixth Form and the Dance Committee—I have advised them to simplify the arrangements as far as possible, reducing still further the cost of the festivities, and the committees sympathize with my suggestion, though they will, of

course, have to be submitted to the entire Form for consideration.

"Conferences with the heads of departments have been going on, ever since my return, and I have had good results from these heart-to-heart talks. . . . It is not hard to smile and smile as I go about among the boys and men and household generally. They are all so cordial that I begin to believe they are glad to have me back; and I have been both touched and amused to hear of the queer manifestations of their feelings. The other day, after I had said grace, one of the youngsters at G. . . .'s table said—'Gee, don't it sound good to hear that!'"

"We had a most interesting visit from the Hampton Singers, one of the boys we have been educating, Major Moton and Dr. Frissell. The doctor let himself out on broad educational questions, and gave me lots to think of in terms of our opportunities in educating young men to assume their rightful burdens in the amelioration of social conditions—strangely enough the very matter that has been most on my mind since I have returned home.

"He spoke in noble terms of the school, its work and position guaranteeing the success of any definite measures we might undertake to train our boys for the highest type of citizenship. We must have men for this, *a* man at least, and we must have him soon.

"I have really been deeply touched by the many expressions that have come to me since

my return, giving me quite a heartening, as if I did signify to the boys, as well as to their parents, in a personal way.

"M. C. was here for a few hours on his way to New Haven, from Mercersburg, where he and another Yale man spoke on Sunday. I was delighted to find him taking this active part in the Christian work again. He looked like a prince of the blood, and I was proud to feel him a Hill School boy, after our own heart.

"I have never seen the boys evince such cheerful courage under affliction as the conditioned boys do this term. The spirit of the school, through and through, except in a few instances, is very fine and comforting."

For the third time, in the summer of 1909, he went to Nauheim, seeking the benefit of the treatment there. His whole family were with him, Mrs. Meigs and her two daughters coming from Florence, and Dwight from Oxford, in which places they had been during the winter.

He was deeply grieved and burdened as he left The Hill by a grave moral disloyalty on the part of several Sixth Formers which necessitated their expulsion from the school. He writes of this to one of the boys who had written to him:

"My dear Cameron:

"Your deeply appreciated letter has reached me here in Nauheim. I can hardly tell you

how comforting your words of sympathy and appreciation are. It was, and is, a grief beyond words to have this matter come up at all, and especially so at the very end of the year, when our hearts and minds are so naturally pre-occupied with the joys and interests of the Sixth Form, on the very eve of their graduation. It literally takes the life out of me, and I am more conscious of it than ever.

"Of course, much of this sort of thing is done thoughtlessly, but after so many years at The Hill one would think that Sixth Form boys would feel some sense of responsibility.

"It hurts the school, the moral consciousness of the younger boys, the families and friends of the fellows who are disciplined, who always resent our action, no matter what it is, and thus creates an atmosphere of unkindness, and often bitterness, instead of sympathy, appreciation and friendliness. God knows how unspeakably hard it always is to have to say the final words, and I shrink from it more each year.

"Just as I was feeling most distressed over the whole affair, comes along your blessed letter, for which I cannot thank you adequately.

"'Mrs. John' shares my sense of gratitude, and joins me in love.

"You know that she and I came over last November, spending the months of December, January and February in Florence, near Margaret and Marion, in school there.

"I returned home early in March, and

'Mrs. John' continued in Florence until the girls' school year ended, in May, since which time they have been in Northern Italy, France and England, joining Miss Elizabeth and me on our steamer, at Dover, and coming on to Antwerp, and after a week of travel, largely in Holland, by the girls, with their aunt, we are here for this month. At the end of the month, we go to Switzerland, for my 'after cure,' and in August to England, where, on the last of the month, Dwight is to be married."

During practically all the session, beginning in the fall of 1909, he was at his post in the school, and in the spring he wrote to one of his daughters, who was still abroad, of the annual gathering of the old boys.

"This has been the greatest reunion we have ever had.

"Over seventy of the old boys have been back and quite 'filled us up' with their undisguised happiness at returning to the school, but we have had more old fellows here on other occasions. What has given this gathering its distinction has been the ardent enthusiasm of the fellows over the present condition of affairs in the school; its spirit was never so fine, and we all feel it most keenly.

"There was a meeting yesterday at noon in the 'Gym,' when several of the Alumni spoke, Bill Warren greeting them as president of the Sixth Form, and a noble poem by

The Chapel
In the Cloister on the Right John Meigs is Buried

Herman Hagedorn was read in his absence by Mr. Bement. It was entitled 'God and the Warrior,' and will be published in the *Record*. Billy Bird, Bert Alexander, Wolcott Humphrey and Will Fincke, as president of the Alumni Association, spoke to great effect, and there were cheers and songs to stir up enthusiasm. In the afternoon, two Alumni nines played ball, and at eight in the evening the meeting of the 'Ancients' took place, followed by a dinner at nine.

"There has been more close, intimate fellowship this time than ever before, and we all feel comforted and cheered by the great rally."

In the summer of 1910, he was at Lake George, and in the fall he came back to The Hill for what was to prove the last complete session of his mastership.

In February of that school year he went South with Mrs. Meigs to Florida, and as he turned his face homeward he wrote to his sister at The Hill:

"Feb. 21st, 1911.

"My beloved Sister:

"I need not tell you, but I must, how gratefully we have borne you in our hearts and minds these past two weeks during which we have been able, owing to your great and loving devotion, to rest awhile and gain strength, I am sure, for what awaits us in the remaining weeks of this hard term. . . .

"I do not know when I have had a quieter,

more restful week than the past week has been.

"Marion is getting out of it all she can, too; we drive daily in the sun for two or three hours, and walk in the mornings.

"I have read four or five novels to her and 'The Corsican,' ostensibly Napoleon's diary.

"Thursday we go to see Russ Bowie and Jean, remaining until Monday A. M., when we go to the New Willard, Washington, hoping to reach home Thursday evening, March 2nd. . . ."

The visit of which he speaks in the last paragraph was to the Rectory of a country parish at the head of the beautiful Piedmont Valley, circled about by the Blue Ridge Mountains, in Virginia. For two days he rested there and enjoyed himself with the light-heartedness of a boy. He was—as has been said—under very strict rules as to his diet, and had observed them for a long time with inflexible regularity. So breakfast was made ready for him according to his usual routine. But he happened to be fascinated by the "batter-cakes" and other unfamiliar things which the old colored cook was sending in to the rest of the family group, and in exuberance of rebellious spirits, he flung his diet to the winds, and reveled for once in whatever he liked, as much as he liked. He drove about

the country in a buggy, went to church on Sunday and met the people of the neighborhood, and everywhere his big presence radiated the warmth of his own unfeigned enjoyment.

The errand that took him away somewhat earlier than he had planned was characteristic of him. There had been a rector in a certain church he was familiar with who had left that church under doubtful circumstances, and had come into one of the dioceses in Virginia seeking work under its Bishop. Dr. Meigs' sensitive regard for the honor of the Church at large made him feel he ought to let the Bishop know of the clergyman's record; yet his generous desire that the man himself might be given the utmost consideration to which he might in any wise be entitled made him shrink from writing the bald facts in a letter. So, though the whole matter had no claim upon him whatsoever, he went out of his way on a long and tiring journey to meet the Bishop and tell him face to face the facts in the whole case.

At morning prayers the morning before he left, he was asked to read the verses in Philippians, which he read so often at The Hill and which—to those who had ever heard him there—always thereafter seemed to echo with his voice. So he read them:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." And so, from the quiet of the mountains, he went on his way, back to the work of the school.

At Easter, in 1911, he wrote to his daughter from The Hill:

"This blessed Easter Day our hearts are full of gratitude and peace in the thought of you, and your participation with us in all that the day typifies.

"Heaven and earth are in beautiful harmony and inspiring accord: sunshine and answering blossoms tell the tale of the old and yet ever new miracle of nature's resurrection. . . .

"Dwight brought over the adorable baby on Thursday afternoon, and by this time, all who have seen her beauty and brightness are groveling at her dainty feet. She seems to realize how loving and lovely life is, and smiles and even laughs audibly at the contemplation of the adoring friends who surround her at every turn. . . .

"Dr. Abbott is the preacher to-day, and tells me his theme will be 'Immortality'—a great subject for a great man, who, personally, is as simple and loving as a little child."

Once again, and for the last time, in the summer of 1911, he went to Bad Nauheim for the measure of strength which the treatment there seemed to give him. Thus he writes home:

"The first week has passed fairly swiftly. What with the arrivals and departures of acquaintances, and the old familiar routine of baths, walks, drives, concerts, afternoon teas and passing glances at the glorified tennis pavilion and grounds, where, strange to say, I do not linger as of yore—the days seem to fairly shove each other into the gliding past. . . .

"We had a great Fourth of July celebration, with ex-President Diaz, of Mexico, and Kossuth, the Hungarian statesman, son of the great Kossuth, as 'pièces de résistance,' as the French don't say; while for murder, pure and simple, of patriotic songs, commend me to the alleged German-American Quartette of Bad Nauheim, who mutilated everything in sight or sound, and seemed to revel in their havoc of what true Americans are presumed to hold most dear.

"Well, . . ., these weeks will soon be past, and my face set towards home. God grant that in the interim we may all be kept safe and at peace in the assurance of ever-deepening love for each other and for Him, who gave us to each other, and will keep us until the end, which is only a beginning of diviner things!"

And home again in August, he wrote to Mrs. Raymond:

"I returned home a fortnight ago, to find the dear ones here well and cheerful. . . .

"At this dear anniversary, all of the blessed memories of days that have been and are, and our hopes of those that are still to be, enrich our souls, and give us an ever new sense of gladness and gratitude that we have been born into the priceless heritage of friendship with you . . . and those other beloveds whose names are written on high in earth and heaven."

At the usual time in September, school opened with Meigs at his post. He threw himself unrestrainedly into the work that faced him, and did not go away that fall—as for some years he had been in the habit of doing—for a brief rest after the crowded weeks of the boys' return. He was feeling physically stronger, and his spirits were high. To one of the men whom he was trying to secure as a preacher in the Chapel, Mr. Tweedy, he had written a little before the beginning of the school:

"My dear Friend:

"I returned from Europe on Friday last, having taken the cure at Bad Nauheim, greatly to my benefit, I believe; and my heart has been so invigorated by the baths that I

am stout enough in my nerve not merely to hope, but to expect you to come to us in October.

"We want you, ma honey, and Mrs. John and I will be delighted to have a word of encouragement from you."

But soon the ominous attacks of his heart returned, with increasing frequency and painfulness. Early in November it was decided that he should go away to Atlantic City; and it was hoped that a brief rest there would enable him to take up his work again with recruited strength.

On Sunday, November 5th, the Professor went down into his study for a long talk with a gentleman who had come to enter his boy at The Hill, and with whom he conversed about many things in which they were mutually interested in his characteristic eager and happy vein. He did not feel strong enough to go to the Chapel service, but sat at a window looking out toward the Chapel—it being a beautiful, still autumn day—and sang the hymns with the unseen congregation when their music rolled across the Quadrangle.

On Monday, the 6th, he came down to breakfast, and worked in his study all the morning; and the boys who were at his table remembered afterwards how full of playful-

ness he was that day. In the afternoon he went to his room to bed, for he was to start to Atlantic City the next day, and he had been ordered to rest. Perhaps if in the morning he had saved his strength when he felt so deceptively well, the result that followed with such grave suddenness that night might not have been.

Mrs. Meigs had gone to Philadelphia for the day to see "Miss Elizabeth," who was ill in a hospital there. When she reached home about six o'clock, she found him suffering. Through the evening, he was intermittently in great pain. About ten o'clock, when the lights were going out, and quiet was settling over the school, he cried suddenly for "Mrs. John" as she crossed the room. When she reached his side, he had gone.

Upon The Hill, as the word spread in the morning through its halls, a silence fell. Boys and men gathered here and there, looking at each other with stricken faces. But into that silence came a voice—a voice which gathered up into one heroic utterance all the glory of that faith in the strength of which John Meigs had lived. It was the voice of her who, having known and loved him best, knew best what The Hill had lost, and that also which it could never lose.

The night after her husband and the

school's master died, she asked that all the boys assemble in the schoolroom. There, in the beautiful strength of her great opportunity, she met them face to face. Twenty-one years before, when Edith died, he had tried to shape from his great sorrow a message for the boys he loved. So she yearned to do now for the far larger number of boys in the greater school.

She told them what he and she had always felt—that the world here is only the lesser room which opens into God's greater rooms beyond; and that Death is no veiled terror, but God's messenger, beautiful and benignant, who comes to open the doors of Life for the homeward turning soul.

She tried to make them feel what she believed for them—that when the master whom they had loved was sitting in that schoolroom at his desk, and looking into their faces, he could not know what was going on in their minds and hearts; but that freed from the limitations of the body, he knew now, and would know. And as she plead that they should work and live henceforth, and "play the game" as with the challenge of his eyes upon them, she told this story, which years before a minister had related at The Hill.

An Oxford man who was famous as a cricketer, just before the great final match be-

tween his own university and Cambridge, was summoned home by the sudden death of his father. He returned the very day of the match, and by his brilliant, almost inspired, playing, won the game for his university. One of the professors complimented him on what he had done in the face of his great bereavement. He quietly and modestly explained to him the reason why he had returned to play in the match, and the real source of his brilliant playing. His father had always been more interested in cricket than anyone in the world, but was totally blind and had never seen him play a game. "To-day," he said, "I know for the first time in his life he has seen me play, and so I played the game for him."

Then she quoted to them the "Christus Consolator," which she and he had loved so long:

"Beside the dead I knelt in prayer,
And felt a presence as I prayed;
Lo! It was Jesus standing there,—
He smiled, 'Be not afraid!'

. . . . . .

"Dear Lord, how shall we know that they
Still walk unseen with us and Thee,
Nor sleep, nor wander far away?
He smiled—'Abide in Me!'"

Back from the hushed schoolroom, into the presence of her dead she went again, and for

nearly four hundred boys, the thrilling wonder of a mightier Life shone for that great moment real.

It had come true, what John Meigs had written four months before—the end was only "a beginning of diviner things."

CHAPTER X

VICTORY

The Appeal Which Determined the Place of His Burial—The Power of an Immortal Faith—Home-Coming of the Old Boys—Services in the Chapel—What John Meigs' Life Had Meant.

OVER The Hill a kind of exalted quiet brooded, and a wonder and a mystery like the first wakening of the earth when a summer's morning dawns. John Meigs' faith in Life was triumphing in the school where he had died.

Many who had loved him came to The Hill in the swift impulse of sympathy and comfort. They entered there into an experience transfiguring and new.

Dr. and Mrs. Raymond, whose lives had been so intertwined with John Meigs' own, were on the sea, returning from Europe. Their daughter came, and thus she wrote to her father and mother of her meeting with "Mrs. John":

"She came to us just as we reached the door, in that swift 'claiming' way she has, and took us two alone up to her bedroom, where on the couch at the foot of the bed,

the dear Professor lay asleep, looking, with his great broad shoulders in the white night-gown, and one hand holding a cluster of pansies, like a mighty angel resting between errands. Strength, serenity and dignity were in the uttermost corners of the room, because of him. I was never more intensely aware of all the 'meanings' that Mrs. John had accumulated in that beloved room of theirs than in those few minutes that we three stood together with our arms entwined, while Mrs. John talked with such simplicity, and all the little mottoes stood round listening in wonder and saying to themselves, 'This must be what we mean!' I spoke to Mrs. John in that quiet time of the deep impression her little talk had made on the boys, and she said, 'I'm glad. I was afraid the boys would think of me just now as being far away and not to be approached in my bereavement; and I thought and thought what would be the best way to make them feel me near and close to them all. And as I sat beside John's couch, I said out loud, 'Dear, do *you* want me to talk to the boys? Do *you* think I'd better?' and it was almost as if he said in words, 'Yes, I do.'"

Meanwhile, as the body of the great headmaster lay in the quiet room, up above the tree-tops of The Hill, there was brought to "Mrs. John" this note:

"As Stanton said, when he closed the eyes of Lincoln, 'Now he belongs to the ages,' so

in regard to Professor, there are, I am sure, some who believe that now he belongs to the school.

"In the chapel porch, on the right of the entrance, with an exposure to the east, and an outlook upon all the larger buildings, is a cloistered spot where I wish he might lie. There, just a little to the Sixth's right, beyond the wall, he would still be their guide and counselor. There, as the boys passed in to service, he would still lead them to the Truth, and there at his side, at the opening of many a schoolboy's life, would be transmitted, from father to son, the ideals which he praised, and the school traditions, to establish which he gave so much.

"It is late. Doubtless I intrude, and there are certain objections, but I am,

"Yours truly,

"R. H. J.

"P. S.—Matthew Arnold, in his inspiring 'Rugby Chapel,' adds his silent plea that even in what we call death, the school may not lose its leader. Some of us need him near. The school will rally about his grave, as he rallied the school about himself. (My personal debt to him and to the school may not be relevant, but life for me has begun again here.) It is for the boys of twenty years hence, as well as for these men of to-morrow, that I write."

That request prevailed. It had been planned to lay him by the side of his two

children; but his grave was made instead in the chapel cloister floor.

On Friday night there was a service in the chapel for the boys, conducted by the Rev. J. Timothy Stone. This was held for them that evening because there would not be room at the service the next day, when the Alumni gathered.

Then on Saturday, the 11th of November, from far and wide the sons of The Hill came home. The world said John Meigs was dead. On The Hill, it seemed to them never had his spirit been so radiantly alive. There was no crepe, nor any badge of mourning. She who had been as himself and with himself had made the school, went to her place in the chapel with unveiled face, and in the white dress she had worn when he was by her side—beautiful in the peace of a transfigured soul. They sang—that great congregation of boys and men and women—no hymns of sad mortality. "For All Thy Saints," "Emmanuel's Land," "Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand" and "Forward Be Our Watchword" —they sang instead, and the great volume of their voices rolled through the chapel arches where his voice so many times had sung before.

And when in the evening of that still, autumn day, boys and men turned to go their

different ways, they knew that they had seen in one supreme example the victory of that Christian faith which overcometh death and time.

From every quarter letters poured in, filled with the tributes of the love of many hearts. And greatly true were some of the things they spoke.

One said:

"It is of such as he, that Bunyan wrote that 'the trumpets were sounding on the other side,' even before his feet touched the wash of the waves of the river."

From far-away Roberts College, in Constantinople, came this word of the president, Dr. Gates:

"Last night we prayed for you, and this morning I spoke to our boys in the college of Dr. Meigs and his work, and the way in which he and you are meeting death. . . . There is nothing sad in such a death. It is the triumph of him that overcometh, it is the entrance of one who has been faithful upon a larger sphere of service, it is the home-coming of one who has traveled far."

Wrote Jacob Riis:

"In all the sense of personal grief and loss, I feel like crying out in the words on the

stone at Quebec: 'Here lies Wolfe, victorious!' Such souls do not die! They go out of our mortal sight for a little while, but God keeps them with Him for evermore."

And from one other friend come these quoted lines of Le Gallienne's ode to Robert Louis Stevenson:

"Not while a boy still whistles on the earth,
Not while a single human heart beats true,
Not while Love lasts, and Honor, and the Brave
Has earth a grave,
O well-beloved, for you!"

So in the quiet cloister of the chapel his body lies; but over The Hill it is as though his spirit brooded still. And where, on many paths, they walk who have felt his touch, in truth, in manliness, in self-forgetting service, and in the power of that high consecration which lifts its eyes to God,—there his spirit goes on far and living ways beyond the school.

In the "Hill School Record," for December, 1911, first were published these noble lines, by Mr. Arthur Judson.

THE MASTER

A massive man, of iron frame, was he—
Our master—and the breadth and bulk of him,
Towering up to the great brow and head,
Fit temple was for the indwelling force
Of mind and soul and will. So clean and pure
He kept that temple, on whose altar high
Burned the eternal fire, the light divine!

Never was quenched that spirit's steady flame;
Nor was it aught diminished, though it fed
So many failing lamps that now burn bright
In other fanes.

Master of men he was,
And fit to be one of Earth's captains—they
Who lead the way where wreaths of oak or bay
Or olive wait them at the goal—Not he!
All this he left, and rather chose to serve
The lonely heart of boyhood. Well he knew
Its foes and weakness, and how small the meed
Of praise or wealth or power the world bestows
On those who save her children. Well for us
He chose!

Who knew, better than he, how much
A man's strength means to a boy? Our dreams

Were all of manhood, of its fancied joys,
Its power and freedom from the petty round
Of childish tasks unwillingly endured.
Little we knew of the hard road that lay
Before us—of the rocky wastes where we
Must eat our bitter herbs and drink our tears,
Must sit apart and mourn the visioned years
Of some unrealized life! But God is good
And works beyond our ken—the discipline
That shaped us for that hour, gave bone and brawn,
Begot the will to live, strength to endure
And conquer in the end—by God's good grace
'Twas given us through those impatient years.

And other things we learned—not to be told;
For of that inner life the Spirit knows,
And He alone can speak. But memories
There are that daily spring beside the road
We travel, blossoming as from the seeds
Of deathless youth dropped in our stony soil
By Heaven's ungrudging winds:—
that quiet hour
By night, when some sweet thought of home
Gave us new heart; that first awakening
Within us of the sense of mastery;
Those days of spring when incense, from the fields
Arising, drifted from the winds afar,
Seeking our studious chamber, to invite
Our thoughts. Again how near they seem, how dear!
Those boyish friendships, voices, grip of hands,
A smile, a word—yet all of life was there;
For thus the spirit, proud and shy, reveals
That which the tongue can ne'er consent to tell.

How like an endless string of priceless pearls
Those days, years, moments,—till the last of all,

When with uncovered head we said farewell
To them and to the Master of The Hill.
For his it was—that city beautiful;
His the strong hand that held it in its seat;
His was the master-mind that planned its walls
And built its towers; until its every stone
And ivy leaf and cloister breathes of him.
His tread yet echoes through our halls; his voice—
That marvelous voice—is ringing in our ears.
How it could pierce the flimsy, futile mask
Of pride or falsehood and confound the guilty soul!
Or, tender as a woman's, win the heart
Forth from our very bosoms till we stood
Ready to dare a soldier's part to play.
Often we counted him unjust and harsh,
Judging in youthful haste, all unaware
That while we slept he pleaded with his Christ

For us and for himself—that he might have
The wisdom to decide, the will to do
That which his heart would not—that we might be
Strong men and true, brave, loyal, honest, pure.

Had he his faults? Well, he was just a man—
And therefore did we love him—a great man
In all he did; and mightily he warred
Against the flesh. He ever scorned to give
Ground in the fight. His noble spirit rose
Triumphant over age and grief and pain.
He toiled unto the end and finished all.
Death found him at his post, his work was done.
Right gladly did he hear the trumpet call
That rang victorious o'er a well-fought field.
He stripped him of his arms, he sheathed his sword
He laid the faithful, weary body down
To sleep. Ah! who would grudge him of his rest!

But O if I might see again his smile
So tender, hear his voice, or meet again
Those eyes that looked so deep and saw so far!
Then might I—

Nay, the dawn is drawing nigh
And we must raise our standard with the sun.
Buckle each strap, close up the ranks and on,
On with our colors to another war.
Thus shall our city stand, and men shall say
In years unborn, on many a distant field:
"The children of The Hill have passed this way."

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